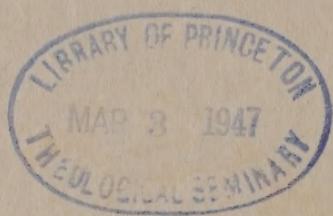


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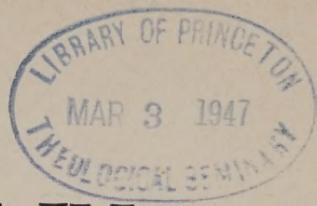
**GROUP PROCESS
IN ADMINISTRATION**

GROUP PROCESS IN ADMINISTRATION

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Foreword

T

HE APPLICATION of democratic principles to administrative procedures is a timely emphasis. Much has been written about the process of democracy in group work, but it is no longer enough for agencies to be concerned with democratic method in groups, clubs and classes. The real test of democratic method is in its application to administration where structure, money and personnel can be utilized as democratic means to democratic ends. If there is not democracy in the administration of the institution as a whole, it will sooner or later be defeated in the parts which make up the whole.

Mr. Trecker in this book applies the principles of group work to administration, challenging administration to provide for participation in planning and in policy making by boards, committees, staffs and constituency; he insists that administrative responsibilities, as well as group activities, help people to grow, to develop initiative and to learn from consequences.

The author of *Group Process in Administration* maintains that administration is not a matter of a limited management group, nor the prerogative of a professional expert, but that it must find ways of including all the people in an agency. His insistence on the joint participation of professional staff members and volunteers in order to "facilitate intermingling of minds" is a stimulating contribution to the problem of volunteer-professional relationships. This emphasis upon coordinated, harmonized group participation in administration is significant. For too long, social and religious agencies have taken their administrative pattern from business, believing that highly centralized con-

trol by able leadership was the only form of efficient administration.

The attempt to put group work learnings into administrative operations is of strategic significance in these days, for community problems arising from the competition of individuals for group leadership and from the rivalry between groups will be solved only by the resolution of group conflicts. If young people are to learn how to use and respect democratic processes in politics, as members of school boards, as officers of fund-raising agencies, their first learnings could most naturally and effectively come in settlements, churches, associations and other agencies.

In the coming days, the fate of the democratic ideal may well rest on the ability of the democratically minded to establish procedures that will facilitate rather than hinder the realization of desired ends. The establishment of such democratic procedures involves developing the kind of social structure within which interchange is possible. In the life of organizations, as in all social relationships, those responsible for establishing these procedures must deal with concrete facts, and find a way through inevitable resistance, confusion and fear.

When the going tends to be hard, the administrator must ask himself: Are the procedures, perhaps, destructive of human values, and thus sterile in accomplishing cooperative results? When procedures are right, miracles can and do happen, both in the mind and spirit of the administrator and in the lives of all the people involved in the administrative scene. Without such procedures, ends are lost by default, and defeat is certain.

Mr. Trecker has done a valuable service in this clear analysis of the application of learnings from the group work field to democratic administration in all types of welfare agencies.

GRACE LOUCKS ELLIOTT

Grand Secretary, National Board, YWCA
GENERAL

Preface

THIS MATERIAL on the group process in administration has been in the making for several years. In 1940 and 1941 when I was chairman of the Division on Education and Recreation of the Council of Social Agencies of Chicago we set up a Division Committee on Democratic Administration. This was done as a part of the Chicago Group Work Agency Study, for it was our belief that agencies needed guidance in reviewing their own administrative practices from the standpoint of democratic principles and procedures. The thinking of this Committee, later summarized in report form in 1942, helped me to feel the tremendous importance of the group aspects of administration.

In the summer of 1942 I was given the opportunity to lead a course on Group Process in Administration as a part of my faculty function in the Graduate School of Social Work, University of Southern California. This teaching assignment had as its primary focus the principles involved in administrative work with boards, staffs, constituency and community groups.

As a result of these experiences I am able to present this material as a point of view or system of thought about administration with and by means of groups. It is my hope that the content has a consistency and relevancy that will make it useful in a variety of social agency settings. Though any preliminary

formulation must necessarily be partial in scope these chapters will be of help, we hope, to executives and staff, board members and students of social agency administration. Perhaps it is not too much to assume that this arrangement of ideas will encourage others to study and report on parts of the process with which they have special acquaintance.

Simply stated, *social agencies are made up of various groups of people who must be helped to correlate their separate efforts for the successful operation of the whole.* An important part of administration is to provide continuous leadership for these groups, board, staff, constituency and community, which are the natural units of agency development. To provide effective group leadership, administrative personnel must have an understanding of groups and skill in working with them. Social group work as a method in social work has much to contribute at this point. The way our agencies are administered has important implications for individuals and groups in need of the services our agencies have to offer. The vitality of the administrative process is of the utmost significance. To assure a vital process in our administrative work with groups we need more knowledge, understanding and skill. This is an effort to apply some of our growing knowledge of groups and how to work with them in the area of administration.

Chapter I "Administration as a Group Process" and Chapter IV "The Planning Process in Administration" were presented as papers at the Conference on the Job of the Executive Director in the YWCA, held at Frances Shimer College, Mt. Carroll, Illinois, in December 1945. Chapter VI "Administration and the Community" was published in *The Woman's Press* in February, March and April 1943. Chapter V "Work

with Committees" includes some of the material from an article entitled "Committees and Group Work" which appeared in *The Woman's Press* in November 1945.

My deepest thanks go to Dr. Arlien Johnson, Dean of the Graduate School of Social Work, University of Southern California, and to my colleagues on the faculty of the School. There I have been a member of a professional staff group thoroughly committed to the principles set forth in this book. There I have had an opportunity to experience in action much of what I have written. Good group process in administration has been demonstrated day by day. It is impossible to overestimate the influence of this experience on my thinking.

I am also indebted in a special way to many graduate students whose thoughtful participation in classes made it possible for me to enlarge upon ideas and to shape the preparation of material in terms of practical problems which they faced. The same indebtedness is due to many social agencies in Chicago and Los Angeles. The stimulation which comes from working with outstanding workers in the field of practice is of major importance.

My grateful appreciation is likewise extended to Margaret Logan Clark, Department of Study, Leadership Services Department, National Board, YWCA. Miss Clark first suggested and arranged the publication of some of the material in article form and later advanced the idea of this enlarged manuscript. Her interest in the project and her valuable suggestions have had a vital influence in the actual volume.

The generous help and the unceasing encouragement of Audrey R. Trecker call for more than appreciation. Without her interest and aid in preparing the successive drafts of the

material the manuscript could not be ready at this time.

Thus, many have shared in this volume. Though I am but the agent of their cooperative contributions, I naturally take full responsibility for the synthesis herein recorded.

HARLEIGH B. TRECKER

University of Southern California

March 10, 1946

ADMINISTRATION AS A GROUP PROCESS

chapter one

Nature, Purpose, and Scope of Administration The study of administration has been a growing concern of social welfare agencies during recent years. This evident desire to achieve a deeper understanding of the administrative *function* has been coupled with strong efforts to clarify the *process* of administration. In this analysis of the *group process* in social work administration we are concentrating upon one aspect of the work of administrators.¹

An inclusive definition of administration has been formulated in *Administration in the YWCA—Principles and Procedures*²: "Administration may be defined as *the process* or means by which the aims of an organization are determined, plans made for achieving those aims and the plans are carried out. Administrative skill lies in the successful steering of that *process as a whole* or of that part of it which falls to one's responsibility."

¹ In this book several terms are used to refer to persons engaged in administrative work. "Administrator" and "executive" appear with greater frequency than "worker" or the general phrase "administrative leadership". The choice of term is related to the subject matter treated in the particular chapter. In every instance we are referring to the staff workers responsible for administration.

² By Helen D. Beavers (Woman's Press, 75 cents). See also other material prepared by the Administrative Affairs Staff, National Board, YWCA.

We thus see administration as a creative process of thinking, planning and action inextricably bound up with the whole agency. We see it as a process of working with people to set goals, to build organizational relationships, to distribute responsibility, to conduct programs and to evaluate accomplishments.

The real focus of administration is relationships with and between people. The process creates and re-creates designs which make the most of the collective judgments of the community, the persons participating in the membership or program, the board and the staff. The continuous mobilization of positive elements which come out of the interaction of all persons concerned with the total agency gives administration its dynamic force and power. This requires leadership with unusual insight into behavior plus skill in helping people relate to one another so that a unity of purpose and effort is created. Startling implications are apparent when we conceive of administration in terms of the intricate, complex relationships of people united for common objectives.

The purpose of administration in an agency is the purpose of the agency itself. The materials of the administrative process are the ideas, feelings and experiences of people because the agency *is* people and administration must be thought of as a part of that which is being administered. The scope of administration is broad because it must devote itself to working with *all* the factors that influence the capacity of the people in the agency to achieve their goals.

Our study and understanding of social work administration have gone through a variety of stages. Each exploration and each development has added to our knowledge. Early efforts may be said to have concerned themselves with definitions of

social work administration, job analyses of administrators and techniques or mechanics of administering.³ There was a tendency to think of *administration* and *management or control* as synonymous. Invariably we associated administration and the administrator, and tended to emphasize the one-man aspect of administration in our job analyses. The techniques of administration, often manipulatory in essence, were listed.

A second phase of our study developed the concept of administration as a creative educational process.⁴ Social agencies were looked upon as social systems, and administration was characterized as primarily a personal and human activity with emphasis on leadership. On still another front, efforts were made to analyze the administrative task from the standpoint of professional skills involved.⁵

There have been some writing and teaching on the group aspect of administration. "Organization to administer any enterprise or service calls for a *group* of people working together, with their individual functions coordinated into a smoothly working whole and seeing themselves as important but not isolated, significant only as others are significant, too. Skill in administration consists not only in building organizational machinery which is adapted to the work to be done but also in so dealing with the human parts of the machine that they all work at their individual or collective best."⁶

³ See *Social Work Administration* by Elwood Street (Harper, 1931; out of print—refer to Public Library).

⁴ See *Dynamic Administration, The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett*, edited by Henry C. Metcalf and L. Urwick (Harper, 1942, \$3.50).

⁵ See "Professional Skill in Administration" by Charlotte Towle in *The News-Letter* (American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, May 1940).

⁶ Quoted from *Learning and Teaching in the Practice of Social Work* by Bertha C. Reynolds (Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1942, \$3.00).

In summary, our understanding of the nature of social work administration has evolved to the point that we now identify administration with *process* rather than *techniques*; we see administrative functions as *responsibilities widely distributed* in contrast with *authority centered in one individual*; and we place administration in its proper setting as *an inherent part of the whole social work process rather than merely a tool, adjunct or facilitating device*. We are now at the point of examining and making specific that part of social work administration in which group processes are predominant.

**Administration as
a Group Process—
an Emerging Concept**

Social welfare agencies are made up of various groups. Some of them are responsible for the conducting of programs and the rendering of services. Other groups take responsibility for planning and financing. A variety of groups are active as members, participants or recipients of professional services. They may be called agency constituency or clientele. In large agencies a major share of the time of administrative personnel is devoted to work with these groups. There are definite and specific skills involved in giving leadership to groups. These skills are predicated upon basic understandings of persons in their group relationships.

The professional worker is called upon to build, form and develop groups of several different kinds. Recruiting, selecting and orienting new staff, volunteers and board members are continuing duties of administration. The conducting of group meetings and the training of others to plan and lead group discussions is another area of work. Maintaining records of group meetings and writing reports of group action come under

the general heading of administration. Expert knowledge is required of the worker who must make judgments concerning when to refer a matter to a group. Choice among groups to which it is to be referred and the timing of referral are important. Groups need help in making a plan and schedule for their work. They need suggestions on how their work relates to the work of other groups and the agency as a whole. These specific activities of administrative leadership support the belief that there is emerging a definable content, body of knowledge and skill in the group aspects of administration.

As an incentive for the development of thinking in group process skills we have the cultural milieu of today. The collectivism and interdependence of modern society are no less evident in the modern social welfare agency. As agencies have grown in size and scope, specialization and departmentalization have come. Almost all the current complexities of contemporary society are reflected in our agencies. No one person can expect or be expected to know all that is required to make that agency operate effectively and efficiently. It takes the best thinking and the particularized effort of many individuals and groups to offer a program or service that meets community needs by means of the newest knowledge in professional practice. None of these individuals or groups can have more than a partial view of the agency unless efforts are made to relate their experience and function to one another. Coordination of effort which results in integration is one of the prime responsibilities of administration.

We are beginning to see that we cannot divorce the process of administration from the content of the agency program or service. The effect of administrative procedures is felt by those

who work for the ends of the agency and by those who share in its program. The group approach is intimately related to our deepest beliefs about democracy as a process of group living. There is a certain underlying philosophy about the group approach to administration. When we think of the basic assumptions which must be made, several stand out very clearly:

1. All the groups in the agency are equally important parts of the whole. The concept of superior-inferior is eliminated, and in its place we substitute an equality of status based upon function. Staff, board, volunteers, members, constituents are related not by means of vertical higher-lower scales but by virtue of their function in the agency.
2. Participation in group life is essential if that group is to meet the needs of the members and develop a high enough group morale to carry responsibility. It is genuine participation, not mere listening, that is required if groups are to be significant.
3. Administrative authority is authority along with rather than over others. It is derived from consensus and voluntary choice of action rather than fiat or decree. This is authority which grows out of group intelligence; it is behavior which is conscious and controlled in its ultimate purposes.
4. The use of the group approach in administration calls for a reorganization of many of our habits and for new patterns of thinking. On a deeper psychological level it is certain that the ego satisfactions of the administrator are achieved on an entirely new basis. Individual accomplishments are subordinated to group accomplishments.

Different qualities of executive ability become apparent. Emphasis must be placed on skills in communication, the development of representative thinking, decentralization and delegation of duties. The ultimate of skill resides in the continuous enlargement of group awareness so that integration comes as a natural outcome of group effort.

Though standards of administrative practice may be similar to both good case work and good group work, several criteria of effective administration have been recognized. When we use these criteria to evaluate administration we see how important group relationships have become. Criteria of social agency administration have come out of practice and, more recently, out of the critical analysis of practice. These criteria are useful in helping us to understand the necessity for a high quality of group leadership in administration.

FIRST, administration must be in harmony with the basic objectives of the agency. If the agency is devoted to the task of helping people develop their capacities to participate cooperatively in the creation of a democratic social order, then the ways in which the administrative processes are carried out must be living manifestations of the cooperative and democratic ideal. Just as administration cannot be separated from that which is being administered, we cannot separate ends from means. This has been discussed in an illuminating fashion in *The Future of Administration*⁷ with the significant subtitle "The Transition from 'For' to 'With'".

⁷ Olive Van Horn and Lois Diehl, *The Future of Administration*, 1943, published by General Secretaries Section of the National Association of Employed Officers in the YWCA (available from The Woman's Press, 25 cents).

SECOND, administration must be based upon a dynamic understanding of individuals and groups in their cultural setting. The materials of administration are human materials. Budgets, policies, buildings, facilities, are empty and meaningless unless they are seen as the creations of people for the better fulfillment of community needs as they see them. This does not lessen the importance of properly conceived budgets, workable policies and adequate facilities. Rather it places emphasis upon working with the people who must ultimately provide the means of operation as products of their understanding work with one another for the benefit of all.

THIRD, administration must be flexible as to procedures and capable of adjustment to meet changing conditions and needs. It is this principle of inherent flexibility which is frequently overlooked in our attempts to standardize administration. Actually there can be no growth without adjustment to change. Attempts at administrative reorganization have not been conspicuously successful when reorganization implies large-scale change. Resistance is too great. However, if changes are made one by one to keep pace with changes in objectives and program, administration can be self-modifying. This will avoid our having a Model-T administrative motor in a B-29 social agency. The key to it is in our attitude toward change and our desire to keep pace with new developments.

FOURTH, the policy-making and the operating phases of social agencies must be integrated so that policy flows out of operations and operations truly represent policy. Unfortunately, we have had a false cleavage between policy making and operation. Some have held that policies are to be made by one group

placed at a higher "level" in the organizational hierarchy. Then, pursuant to this theory, operations are to be performed by a lower "level". Ultimately the recipients of service become the "level" at which policies and operations become united in the form of a program. This cannot be called democratic, nor is it good administration. To fail to recognize the inseparable nature of policy making and operations is to refuse to recognize one of the salient problems of our period in history.

The struggle through which we are going at the present time is evidence of the fact that for too long the people have felt left out of the really important places and decisions. Modern administration must replace the hierarchical form of structure with its "levels". A new structure which unites rather than divides is called for. A new scheme of relationships which calls forth human energy rather than keeping it under "control" is essential. A belief that the agency exists for all and that administration must serve all can only be carried into action if we eliminate the false separation between "deciders", "doers", and "receivers". Policy is never static. It is as much in movement as are operations. The vitality of an agency is in direct proportion to its capacity for growth based on the meaningful interplay of experience.

The Setting of Administration — The Social Agency as a Social System

When we consider the manifold duties of administrative personnel they must be thought of in relation to that which is being administered, namely, the social agency. Our understanding of the agency has moved a considerable distance beyond the earlier and simpler description of institutions being "merely lengthened shadows of the man"

who created them. In our complex industrial society it is evident that social agencies are increasingly intricate in their design and operation. In reality, social agencies are social systems or multiple-group organizations held together by the interaction of all who have a part in their creation and operation. The social agency as a social system has clear characteristics which can be identified as follows:

Social agencies come into being and develop as a *result of needs growing out of social relationships*. Certain needs of people, personal and environmental, can best be met by collective or joint effort. Just as the agency is conceived out of social relationships it is held together and enabled to advance to higher levels of attainment because of the new processes of interaction it creates and fosters.

Social agencies have *a variety of purposes expressed as social or human*. To be of maximum value these purposes or objectives must be established in relation to other agencies and services available for use by people in meeting their needs. This implies a definite willingness to cooperate with all forces equally committed to working toward similar goals.

Social agencies render immediate service and satisfaction of wants in the contemporary scene but they also have *an inherent interest in shaping the future*. The concern for the future, however, is concurrent with meeting the needs of the present. Directions for the future must emerge out of critical evaluation of adequacies and inadequacies in the present.

When we try to understand the social agency as a social system it becomes an entity which must be seen as a *whole* because each part bears a relation to every other part and all are interdependent. The agency is a number of individuals and groups working toward a common end. Each brings a different background and contribution. Each assumes a measure of responsibility for a part of the job. Through the never-ending process of communication and interaction with one another the *whole* actually becomes far greater than the sum of its parts. While this can be expressed visually in organization charts showing structure, the important outcome of the interaction of minds is the vitality of the sentiments, convictions and influences developed among the participants.

The multiple-group nature of the social agency is seen when we look at the groups. The groups we think of when we separate the whole into its parts include:

The membership, clientele or constituency with a variety of subgroups;

The staff with clear-cut groups such as professional, non-professional, paid, volunteer, "generalists" and specialists;

The board with the numerous committees carrying particular duties;

Those who contribute to the agency services but are not necessarily members or clients;

Groups out in the larger community who give sanction to the work of the agency in various ways.

The order of listing has been deliberately casual. Absence of numerical designation is intentional because instead of plac-

ing these groups in a top-down hierarchical chart it seems more fitting to think of them in a continuous circular relationship to each other. This carries with it an attempt to eliminate status based on "authority" and to equalize position based on function. It voices the hope that we can achieve genuine cooperation in administration.

The Function of Administrative Leadership as a Helping Process

The task of administration is a multiple task. Though it is necessary to see it in its largest possible aspect it is also necessary to see the subfunctions. The literature of administration is helpful in identifying the chief jobs which make up the over-all administrative function. It is the duty of administration to determine the *broad area of service* in which the agency will work. *Specific purposes* plus a reasonable scope must also be worked out by administrative leadership. Beyond this it is required that we establish *policies* according to which we will operate. *Broad lines of organizational structure* must be erected. *Sound financial planning* is, of course, a basic function. None of these functions can be brought into a program bearing results without personnel to staff the operations, hence *staffing* is another specific job of administration. The duties unfold to include *business management*, *maintenance of physical properties* and *planning for a steady flow of supplies and materials*. *Community relationships* must be established and maintained both from the standpoint of public relations and, more important, from the standpoint of good community planning for services. Furthermore, all these functions require a *never-ceasing coordination* which becomes the chief means of arriving at *balanced, harmonious operations*.

Admittedly this list of functions places a heavy responsibility on the general process we call administration and on the workers we call administrators. As a list, however, it seems somewhat cold, lifeless, even mechanistic. This list of *what* is to be done by administration omits the more important and basic consideration of *how* to do what we know must be done. This omission is serious because it leaves out not only the process but also the people who make the process work. Perhaps it is valid to center special attention on the one primary function of administration which is basic to all the others. Stated very roughly, **IT IS THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF ADMINISTRATION TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP OF A CONTINUOUSLY HELPFUL KIND SO THAT ALL PERSONS ENGAGED IN THE MANIFOLD WORKINGS OF THE AGENCY MAY ADVANCE THE AGENCY TO EVER MORE SIGNIFICANT SERVICE AND ACCOMPLISHMENT.** As we look into this a little further we see administrative leadership giving help to persons at certain key points.

FIRST, we must help the constituency, the community, the board and the staff to discover focal points of community concern sufficiently compelling that they will call forth a maximum of cooperative effort. We give help at the points of objectives and motivations.

SECOND, we must help these same groups develop a scheme of values which enables them to refine, select or choose those needs upon which they will place priority. The trivia of social agency administration frequently obscure the main jobs to be done. To avoid being trapped in trivia we must help people become able to recognize and work upon those things which are really important.

THIRD, we must help our groups by guiding, stimulating, even energizing them so that they will be able to feel within themselves a unity of integrated effort. To a great extent successful achievement in administrative leadership is made by those who are most able to imbue others with a desire to be a part of a collective effort.

FOURTH, we must help our people to determine their skills, strengths, and interests and capacities so that they will be ably matched in responsibilities. When the members, staff and board of an agency are working together at a peak of collaborative endeavor there is a maximum of personal security, because each has a part to play and each will make a contribution to the other so that all will benefit.

FIFTH, we must constantly strengthen and cultivate the conditions necessary for cooperative effort. This means we shall see our first duty as that of helping people relate satisfactorily to each other because, without good personal relationships, free, frank, honest and forthright, there can be little cooperation.

Basic Principles of Administrative Leadership with Groups

an individual which enables him to affect the intentions and voluntary actions of another. . . . The best leadership comes out of a contributive pattern which encourages and provides opportunity for the contribution of each individual; decisions are fashioned out of the combined thinking of the group affected. . . . Once decisions have been made on the basis of intel-

In a report from the field of education we discovered a definition of leadership which is applicable to the administrative situation. "Leadership is that quality in

ligent interaction of the individuals in the group, then the leaders have the responsibility of implementation, reinterpretation and administration.”⁸

Persons carrying administrative responsibility inevitably occupy a central role in the life of a social agency. It is dangerous to dwell upon the specific nature of their responsibilities without first stressing the comprehensive aspect of such work. The administrative leader must possess a dual or bifocal vision which enables him to see the persons for whom the agency exists and the persons working together to make the agency a reality. Planning, organizing, relating and evaluating are, without this vision, apt to become routines or, worse, unreal abstractions. Administrative workers in social agencies are basically central persons around whom, through whom and with whom others become intimately devoted to helping that agency reach its maximum of effectiveness.

Among the detailed responsibilities we see that the administrator must constantly seek to:

1. Motivate the group, encourage initiative and draw from each group all that it has to give;
2. Enlarge the channels of communication so that the flow of ideas between groups will be continuous and full;
3. Relate the different wills represented by the various groups which make up the agency;
4. Make groups feel their responsibility and widen the extent to which they are competent;
5. Organize the past experience of the group into a strong foundation for future progressive development;

⁸ By Harold Spears and Alice Miel, in *Leadership at Work*, Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction of the National Education Association (National Education Association, \$2).

6. Define the purposes of the program so that immediate and ultimate goals will be compatible and mutually supporting;
7. Open up new paths and new opportunities for the development of the individuals and groups in the total organization.

It is interesting to speculate upon the proportion of time the administrator devotes to work with individuals and to work with groups. The evidence is still impressionistic; however, the very nature of the modern social agency as a multiple-group organism implies that leadership must be given to groups in an ever-increasing proportion. It is our intention at this point to list prominent principles which may help the administrator in work with all the groups that make up the agency. These principles apply with reference to the board, the staff and the members.

FIRST, if we are to work with a group we must know something of its composition and background. This means knowledge and understanding of the individuals which make up the group, its meaning to them as members; and it means a willingness to help individuals become a significant part of the group.

SECOND, if we are to be of assistance to a group we must help the members to define and understand their purpose and function in relation to the other groups which also carry a part of the load.

THIRD, we must integrate these several groups so that harmonious interdependence results and each group supports and sustains the other to the end of agency unity.

FOURTH, we must achieve a personal balance with these groups weighing our time expenditure and thought concentration to the end of a functional equality.

FIFTH, we must give help with problems of group organization so that participation and distribution of responsibility will be widespread rather than centered in a few.

SIXTH, we have an educational task in helping leaders of groups plan and conduct group meetings so as to create and distribute satisfactions among all the members.

SEVENTH, we must help these groups evaluate their work in relation to their responsibilities and in relation to the enduring purposes of the agency.

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MAJOR GROUPS IN THE AGENCY SETTING

chapter two

WHEN WE accept the reality of groups and group effort in social work administration we look at the agency and the administrative process differently. We see that we must understand more about groups, group behavior and group process. This is not because we want the administrative personnel to conceive of themselves as social group workers but because the knowledge, understanding and skill of social group work have a contribution to make to administration. The same is true from the standpoint of social case work. In understanding and working with individuals, administrators are not doing case work but they are making use of the insights of that method. The essential unity of the social work process demands that administration utilize the principles of group work and of case work. Our understanding of groups, our ability to relate to them, our capacity for working with them as administrators are strengthened by deliberate recognition of the similarities between good administration and good group work.

Primary Factors of Group Life Which Must Be Understood

Administrative leadership responsible for giving help and direction to the major groups in the agency setting must understand certain primary factors of group life

as aids to achieving effective relationships. The points at which we must deepen our understanding are both generic and specific. In this discussion we concentrate first upon those elements which apply to all groups in the agency: board, staff and constituency.

The first element to understand is that of *purpose* or *function*. What is the purpose of the group? Why does it exist and what is its function in the agency? Is the purpose clearly understood by the members of the group and by other groups in relation to it? When we have clarity of purpose, place and responsibility, then organizational and structural aspects of group life are influenced accordingly. How we shall organize a group depends upon what that group wishes to accomplish. The way we furnish leadership to a group will vary with the function of the group.

What does being a member of the group mean to the members? What use are they making of the experience which they are having with the other persons in the group? We cannot understand the true significance of a group unless we are aware of the importance which the individual attaches to it. Since the individual has an almost insatiable need for group experiences of a varying kind he will use every group association for partial satisfaction of his wants. Being a member of a staff of a social agency may be a primary group relationship for one worker and a secondary relationship for another. Service on the board of an agency may be the answer to adult desires to participate in the solution of current problems. For another, board membership may supply an outlet for skills or talents not useful in business or family pursuits. If we are to develop groups to the point where they become effective participating

units in the vital affairs of the agency we must see the meaning of the group experience through the eyes of the individual.

What does the group think of itself? How does it look upon the agency and the other groups with which it must work? The amount and kind of group feeling possessed by a group will influence its capacity for working together. Groups develop like individuals. At the beginning a new group may have little awareness of itself as an entity. It may not be able to assume more than partial responsibility for its function until it has been in existence sufficiently long to grow secure and confident. Administrative leadership is interested in assessing the developmental status of the group *as a group*. Where is this group on a developmental scale? What is it ready to take on in the way of program? These are prerequisite questions which can serve a purpose in planning the work of any group.

Composition and size are significant factors in knowing the group. Being a member of a small subcommittee of three to five persons is a much different situation from being a member of a staff of twenty or a board of fifty. The composition of a group is obviously important. When the range of variation among the members is great, the speed with which they reach agreement and action is almost certain to be slower. The more differences among the members the greater the need for skill on the part of the *worker*. Staff groups composed of professional workers are different from staffs of nonprofessionals. Groups of volunteer workers have distinct characteristics. When groups are made up of both professional and volunteer workers they are quite different because of the combinations of interests and backgrounds. A joint committee of board and staff is distinguishable from a separate committee of either. Perhaps one of the vital

principles of group work is the key to our problem. *Groups are different* and must be understood in terms of their differences and worked with accordingly.

The sources and manifestations of leadership in a group are central concerns of the workers. Who are the leaders? How do they offer their leadership capacities to the group? What are the bases for their influence? Are the leadership responsibilities distributed throughout the group on a functional basis or does leadership reside in one person? The administrator, though not always a group leader in a direct and intimate sense, must work with and through the central persons who exert important influence with the group. He is a developer of leadership and a coordinator of leadership influences. To know the group we must know the leaders. To be of help to a group in planning, carrying out and evaluating its affairs we must establish good worker-leader-group relationships.

Groups are formal and informal as to organization. The formal organization includes officers, committee chairmen and other officially designated individuals who carry a specific responsibility. The need for organization of a particular kind is always related to objectives for which the group is working. Organization is a scheme or pattern of individual and group relationships developed by the group to release and focus individual and group efforts. To work with a group we need to understand the nature of its organization. Then we are in a position to judge the extent to which organization and objectives are in harmony. In addition to formal and identifiable organization, members of groups have informal ways of relating to one another and to the business at hand. Status systems are apparent in even the smallest of groups. The presence of the

informal leader, the patriarch, the unofficial representative, the newcomer, the experienced and the inexperienced person are objects of study and understanding.

The previous experience of a group determines to a great extent its present behavior. The methods of work, the ways in which the group obtains satisfaction, the successes and failures it has had are factors in its present development. If we are to understand what a group is we must know something of what it has been and what it is becoming. The new executive or worker with a group is always interested in what the group has experienced in the past. As a matter of principle we endeavor to start with a group where it is and work with it at a pace which is comfortable and natural. To misjudge a group and set tasks which it cannot hope to achieve is frustrating. To pitch the work of a group at too low a level is equally frustrating. A backward look gives reality to the present and formulates the potentialities for the future with greater certainty.

Groups have a certain position or status value within the community and in relation to other groups. Though it is difficult to ascertain the relative positions of groups which vary in function it is true that, within like functional areas, groups tend to take on greater or lesser importance. Case work or group work supervisors as a staff or in staff committees have a position of centrality to workers and to clientele. They are in relation to both groups but may be seen in contrasting roles. The board of an agency is always contrasted with other boards in other agencies. To be a member of a board has a meaning in proportion to the status held by the agency itself. Therefore, we do not work with groups in a separate or isolationist setting but always in relation to like groups in unlike settings.

The group contacts of members must be reckoned with as well. Mrs. A. may be a member of the board of one agency; at the same time, she is an active participant in the affairs of the PTA, the church and the League of Women Voters. In addition, she has relationships with other groups of lesser size and importance to her. To understand Mrs. A. as a member of a board we must be aware of the other groups which influence her and which she influences. Her concentration of energy upon the work of the social agency will reflect the degree to which she sees it as an important service as contrasted with the other calls for her time. Staff members likewise enjoy a multiplicity of group contacts both within and outside the agency. The group worker is a member of the staff, but he is also a member of a neighborhood planning council, his professional association, civic and social groups, and others. His functioning as a staff member in the agency is influenced by his regard for and participation in these other groups of which he is a member. As a matter of principle it appears relatively certain that the response of the person to any group situation is conditioned by his entire range of group experiences past and present. The continuous barrage of attitudes, opinions, facts and behavior expressed in all these outside groups makes a distinct difference in the way we relate to, utilize and perform in the groups of our agency.

Characteristics of the Group Work Method The social agency administrator does not do group work in the sense that group work means rendering a direct service to individuals in groups. However, administration makes use of group work principles and understandings. In

addition to recognizing the importance of studying the group and its meaning to the members, the administrator has valuable help at hand if he will acquaint himself with the chief characteristics of the group work method.

Methods are the ways we do things, the approaches we take and the steps we follow as we seek to accomplish our objectives. Social group work simply says that the *way* activity is carried on is just as important if not more important than the activity itself. Stated briefly, the characteristics of social group work as a method are:

1. *Voluntary participation.* Social group work says that coercive organization of group or individual relationships is fundamentally wrong and productively sterile. Therefore, group workers have skill in arousing interest, stimulating desire and presenting opportunities wide in range so that persons may have choices in their pursuits. Furthermore, group workers are alert to recognize the interests of members as expressed in many ways and to respond to them with appropriate organization. The group worker thus has skill in the art of motivation.
2. *Group formation.* The basis upon which groups are formed is of singular importance. The group work method implies that agencies will form groups only when they meet real needs of persons and will continue groups only as long as they shall operate to the benefit of the individuals involved. Many factors come into view when we consider the bases upon which groups are formed. Interest, experience, leadership, friendship, purpose and need, are but several. To be aware of these

factors and apply them objectively is a characteristic of the group work method.

3. *Movement and progress within the group.* The group work method emphasizes the well-known but insufficiently practiced adage, "Start with people where they are" and adds, "Go no faster than they are ready to go." This is so important that it cannot be overemphasized. The programs of group work grow up from the roots rather than down from the branches. The group worker, then, must have a skill in gauging the point at which persons are in their individual development and their social development. He also needs to have ways at his command to make the same sounding for the group as a whole. Knowing this, it is possible to help groups select materials and media for group expression that will meet their needs and lend themselves to legitimate progress for the group in question.
4. *Determination of objectives and purposes.* The group worker must know where the group wants to go. It is this knowledge of purpose that makes the group under his leadership different from the random undeveloped group. A salient point in group work method is the determination of objectives with the group. Procedures for doing this are being developed by group workers. A sound method can come only when those in charge have as much understanding of the individual in his group setting and its total ramifications as it is possible to get. The entire process of group work is dependent on a cumulative and unfolding knowledge about persons, their needs, relationships and goals.

5. *Discovery of interests and needs.* The essence of any voluntary program is a scheme of activities and experiences that persons really want. Strong in the characteristics of the group work method is the discovery of what persons are interested in and the translation of this discovery into a framework or design of human needs. Persons are not always interested in what they need, nor do they always need what they are interested in. This means conscious devices will be used by the group worker in his study and understanding of individuals and groups. A knowledge of the community and of the socio-psychological climate in which the group lives is basic at this point. The more inclusive it is, the greater will be the understanding and the richer the discovery.
6. *Guidance and direction of interaction.* A long list of techniques and methods emerge when we look closely at what the group worker does as he gives guidance and direction to the group work process. He must first know how to establish an effective working relationship with the group. It must be based on mutual confidence and acceptance. He must then know how to give reality and expression to the evident desires of the group members. This implies that he must of necessity give leadership at times and withhold himself at other times. Knowing when to do this is a real test of leadership and competence. Even more challenging is the responsibility the group leader accepts when he endeavors to bring some members into proper relationships with others and encourages their participation at the point of not only group

thinking but also group feeling and group action. This principle of individualization or particularization within the group complex is of primary importance.

7. *Referral.* One thing the skilled group worker learns rather soon is that the group cannot be all things to all people and cannot hope to meet all the needs that are often evident. It then becomes necessary for the worker to know how to use community resources in the shape of both persons and agencies. We think of this as the referral process or the task of helping individual members of the group to make use of services that are there for the asking if only the person will ask. Getting them to ask is perhaps the essence of it. It is only right that we should have the widest possible concern for those persons in our groups. But, this concern should be restrained by our knowledge that we are often unable to meet some kinds of situations and can best handle them by the referral process.

8. *Evaluation of results.* If we have objectives, if we have a process for arriving at those objectives, it follows that we shall want to evaluate the results of our work. Group workers are interested in evaluation from at least several standpoints: (1) the evaluation of leadership, (2) the evaluation of the group work process, (3) the evaluation of outcomes or changes brought about in persons and (4) the evaluation of group action in terms of the social values stated in the purpose. To them, evaluation is a continuous process which cannot be identified with periodic manipulation of statistics or abstract summaries at terminal points. If the program of the group is to

come up out of their concerns and meet their evolving needs, evaluation must accompany every effort. Furthermore, evaluation implies the ability to recognize the desirable qualities the group is seeking to develop in individuals and in the group as a whole. To make this recognition real it is essential that records of a chronological narrative type be kept.

Understanding and Working with Boards There has been a considerable amount of writing with reference to boards. Most of the articles are concerned with the purpose, organization and management of board affairs.

A review of this literature¹ reveals the following traditional functions of the board:

1. To establish the legal or corporate existence of the agency, whether it be under the auspices of government or voluntary efforts.
2. To take responsibility for formulating general objectives, policies and programs.
3. To inspire community confidence in the program because of the competence and prestige of board members as active trustees of the agency.
4. To assume responsibility for the provision of adequate finances and to be accountable for the expenditure of funds.

¹ See the following articles: Ralph A. Uihlein, "Responsibilities of Agency Boards and Their Members", *Highlights*, April 1945. Michael M. Davis, "Nine Duties for Board Members", *The Community*, October 1943.

Audrey Hayden, "Board Members", *Channels*, December 1943.

Margaret Carey Madeira, "Citizen Boards Are Here to Stay", *PCA Herald*, Public Charities Association of Pennsylvania, January 1946.

5. To provide conditions of work, personnel policies and staff. The board is particularly responsible for the selection and supervision of the executive.
6. To understand and interpret the work of the agency to the community.
7. To study, know and interpret general community needs to the agency staff.
8. To relate the services of the agency to the work of other agencies and to concentrate upon improved community conditions.
9. To conduct periodic evaluation of agency operations with a view to improving and strengthening the amount and quality of work.
10. To provide continuity of experienced leadership so that staff changes will not weaken the effectiveness of the agency.

A critical examination of these functions reveals the tremendous importance and responsibility carried by the board. Though in a sense these functions are inherited, each new board member must be helped to understand the specific duties that are expected of him. No board will spend an equal portion of time on all these functions. Priorities have to be adopted because at certain periods the work of the agency will stress particular aspects. It should be pointed out that these ten functions though listed separately must be understood as a whole. In every instance the functions are shared with other groups in the agency, especially, the function of policy formation. Boards must continually redefine their functions in the light of new circumstances. This calls for thoughtful analysis of purposes and problems encountered in the actual work of the agency.

What kind of group is required to make an effective board?

The social agency belongs to the public. The board is representative of the public and is responsible in a broad sense to the total community. This is equally true with governmental agencies whose

board duties are defined by law and with voluntary agencies whose boards develop their own list of responsibilities. Because the board is a very significant and important group, it occupies a central place with reference to the staff, the constituency and the community. Care must be exercised in the development of the board as a group. Certain characteristics are apparent as we attempt to build the kind of group capable of assuming full responsibility.

1. The board must be a *responsible* group, able to assume its functions and able to command the respect and confidence of the agency and community.
2. The board must be a growing group, interested in accepting greater responsibility as the agency work increases.
3. The board must have complete knowledge of the agency and its operations and be in touch with the full scope of program and services.
4. The board must have a flexibility and willingness to change to meet new conditions as they arise.
5. The board must study and understand its many functions and avoid assumption of staff duties which are different from its own.
6. The board must be widely representative of all the groups and interests which make up the agency. Representation should take in such characteristics as age, sex, occupational pursuits and geographic distribution.

7. The board must conceive of itself as a learning group, ready and willing to spend time on training for its work.
8. The board group must establish certain qualifications or standards for membership, and develop a systematic rotation plan so that new members will come in at stated intervals.
9. The board must know how to receive and analyze factual material as a basis for the making of decisions.
10. The board as a group must be willing to establish a relationship of partnership with the staff and particularly with the executive leadership in the agency.

A group embodying all the above elements does not come about automatically. The way the board is organized, planned for, and worked with, will determine its vitality in actual operation.

Boards must be helped to realize that they must solve their own problems. They must work out things in their own way. With the help of the executive, the board should become a working group rather than a listening group. It should define its job and agree upon ways and means of conducting its work. It should state what it expects of its members and should develop methods of orientation for new members.

Understanding and Working with the Staff The staff group differs from the board group in several ways. Obviously, staff members who devote full time to professional work in the agency give far more attention to agency affairs than do board members. In addition, the staff group is composed of persons with professional preparation and a background of intimate experience in the field of operations. Staff

members are engaged to provide direct services for individuals and groups. The relationship between administrative personnel and other staff members is more direct and sustained. Because of this, their point of view about the agency will be more specific in terms of the area of service for which they are responsible.

Functions of the Staff as a Group The first and foremost responsibility of the staff is *to provide direct services to individuals and groups* seeking to participate in the program of the agency. The staff is there to implement and be responsible for program operations. This requires special skill and competence. Social work as a profession places a maximum of responsibility on the staff member who is called upon to make vital decisions in every phase of his work. It is a further function of the staff *to make possible a smooth-running, effective department or agency*. At this point questions of quantity of work and quality of work arise. The staff as a group are responsible for the maintenance of a high level of quality and the acceptance of a volume of work which can be cared for with the best interests of individuals and groups in mind. A third function of the staff is *to evaluate and seek to improve the quality of service being rendered*. Here their direct contact with individuals and groups makes it particularly necessary that they be willing to scrutinize their efforts with continuous thought and attention.

Since it is impossible to separate agency operations from policy making, a staff function of increasing weight is *to participate in policy formation and revision*. Here staff, board and executive work together because they understand one another's

role and respect one another's contributions. When the total agency is truly united as to objectives there is a minimum of competition between functional groups and a maximum willingness to enlist the utmost of staff participation in the broad problems of agency planning.

Characteristics of the Staff as a Group The staffs in social agencies may range from being aggregates or collections of individuals to being well-integrated and coordinated social units. In the staff there are natural forces which work for both unity and separation. It is the function of administration to help staff workers engaged in related activity for common goals to create a strong group inter-awareness. To accomplish this it is important to recognize the prevalence of natural subgroupings within the larger staff unit. Subgroupings include professional workers, nonprofessional workers, "generalists" and specialists within each group. Workers form additional subgroups around type of training, job analysis, territory or geographic areas they cover. A frequent division within the staff centers around experienced versus inexperienced workers. In social agencies with a large number of volunteers there are additional natural separations between these volunteers and the paid workers. The presence of the numerous subgroupings within the staff makes the need for coordination apparent.

To understand the true significance of the staff group to the staff member, we must ask, what does being a member of this staff mean? What does the worker get from being a part of this staff in this agency? There are several answers:

1. Staff group membership is an economic and vocational affiliation for the social worker. In social work, with its

absence of private practitioners, being a part of a staff is the only way one can exercise his professional skill. Being on the staff opens the major avenue of professional expression and practice.

2. Staff group membership is a satisfaction and status-giving relationship for the individual worker. Being a member of the staff should help the worker feel that his skills are significant addition to the skills of others. The staff member is never isolated but always part of a team of workers.
3. Staff group membership enables the individual worker to increase his own feeling of usefulness through others. Workers operating alone and in specialized areas may seem ineffective. In company with others, individual strengths are multiplied and the efforts of the group take on a new meaning.
4. Relationships with others on the staff help the individual worker to appreciate the impact of the total program of the agency. This is especially important in large agencies.
5. Being a member of the staff group is a major source of professional stimulation. After the completion of professional education, workers can get help, stimulation and guidance from their coworkers if such opportunities are provided.

Underlying these five points is the firm belief that the social relationships of the staff add something profoundly significant in both content and meaning for individual efforts.

Administration and the Staff

The way administrators look at and understand the staff as a group will influence their methods of work with them. The way we

shall organize the staff as a group depends upon what we want for them in terms of performance. What do the members need that they can get from one another? What do they have to contribute to one another? How can we best relate needs and potential contributions in the staff group setting?

Administration has a primary responsibility for creating and maintaining a favorable working situation for the staff. Conditions of work as formalized in personnel policies frequently omit reference to the need for a systematic program of staff development. Staff meetings, conferences, in-service training events, joint staff and board activities are all opportunities for the utilization of the vital influences of group efforts. Such programs should be demonstrations and examples of democratic administration. The staff must be given a large part in formulating the goals for such programs and must be willing to state the kinds of help they wish from administration. Some of the situations where help is needed from administration are listed below.

1. Certain staffs will need help from administrative leadership to enable their original aggregation of persons to become a group. Few groups of specialists are able to reconcile individual responsibilities and duties with larger group purposes without the help of sympathetic, understanding, administrative leadership.
2. Administration will be called upon to help new staff members gain acceptance from the others on the staff group. Since most staffs are always undergoing change as to composition, a regular procedure of group orientation for new staff members is desired. One of the essential

features in worker adjustment to a new job is the early provision of opportunities for satisfying group experience.

3. Administration will be called upon to give a considerable amount of help in the establishment of good working relationships between staffs and boards.
4. Administration will help the staff group to estimate what kind of program it is ready for and it will offer program suggestions which are necessary as a means of getting together and as a means of strengthening the participating capacities of the individuals.
5. Administration must give thought to the selection of new staff members, particularly to how replacements will fit in with the existing group. In addition to studying such items as professional preparation and experience, the specific qualities of an individual's social relationships must be considered.
6. Administration and staff will work together on the creation of instruments and methods of staff evaluation. The staff should assume a large share of responsibility for this activity.

As the staff becomes integrated, differences diminish and each person sees his individuality not thwarted but actually enhanced because of his role and relationship with the others. Good staff morale is good group morale. It has been defined thus: "*Morale* refers to the condition of a group where there are clear and fixed group goals (purposes) that are felt to be important and integrated with individual goals; where there is confidence in the attainment of these goals and, subordinately, confidence in the means of attainment, in the leaders, associates and finally in oneself; where group actions are integrated

and cooperative; and where aggression and hostility are expressed against the forces frustrating the group rather than toward other individuals within the group. . . . *Morale*, which may vary in intensity from low to high, is a psychological condition, prevailing in a group, that is conducive to energetic, coordinated purposive activity. It is the complex resultant of the strength of three directional forces: (1) forces that bind the members to a common goal; (2) forces that bind the members to their leaders; (3) forces that bind the members to themselves.”²

Understanding and Working with the Constituency No one would doubt the fact that social agencies exist for the people. There is no basis for social work as a profession unless it meets universally identified human needs. Case work, group work and community organization have as a central point in philosophy and practice, the idea of working with people rather than for people. “Social work has begun to be able to see people as active in their social milieu, and to aid them in accomplishing their own social objectives.”³ In the actual giving of service the role of the individual has steadily increased and the right of self-determination for individuals, groups and communities is recognized as the essence of professional integrity. Though this ideal may seem to be more or less confined to direct service situations, is it not equally valid for administration as well?

² Quoted from *Psychological Factors in Morale*, A Report on a Conference held November 2 and 3, 1940, under the auspices of Division of Anthropology and Psychology, National Research Council.

³ Quoted from *Learning and Teaching in the Practice of Social Work* by Bertha Reynolds (Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1942, \$3.00), page 333.

Administration always has some kind of relationship with clientele or constituency. The nature and kind of relationship is the question. Should it be with individuals and groups on the basis of providing a service *for* them or should it be on the basis of cooperating with individuals and groups to develop services for them and for the community? Do we want constituency groups to be realistically identified with the agency through administrative process? Do we know what being a part of an agency means to individuals or groups?

Obviously, answers to these questions will determine the way we shall look at and work with constituency groups. If we believe that we should receive critical evaluations of administrative policies and practices from our constituency as an essential means of checking on and improving ourselves, we shall deliberately provide the means for them to do so. If we believe in a democratic social work program, the large traditional gap between persons served and administration must be narrowed. Constituency groups must be made to feel their important role in the agency. In our country we believe in withholding action until those whom the action will affect have had full opportunity to make known their opinions through polls, hearings and other means. Vital decisions affecting the people are thus made after considered judgment has been brought to bear. Surely it is conceivable that social work administration can do no less.

To be sure, there are prominent variations in the ways social agencies will relate to constituency groups. Some agencies, such as the YWCA, are membership organizations, wherein constituency is the agency and vice versa. In such an agency, administrative relationships with members of various classifications

and with electors is a special study.⁴ In other agencies persons relate as individuals. In a child guidance clinic the identification of the person is on an individual rather than a group basis. In institutional programs for children and youth the sense of being a part of the group is strong. In such a setting, constituency groups share directly in the day by day operations of the program. In an agency such as the Travelers Aid the relationship between the agency and the client is short-term, temporary and transient. Here there is little basis for the formation of constituency groups.

Several patterns of organization are in common usage. For example, more and more agencies are encouraging clientele representation on boards and agency committees. To some extent the formation of advisory committees composed of constituency representatives has become one means of enlarging the part that groups play in agency administration. Public opinion polls have been conducted in an effort to get the client's view on the value and quality of services rendered. Such polls are important in the discovery of new needs and in the development of factual information which is necessary in policy formation. The use of the open meeting or hearing as a device to gather information or implement program changes is also recommended. In youth-serving agencies the formation of representative councils made up of two or more representatives from each group has been a prominent development. When a representative council is established, the channel between administration and program groups is direct and open for two-way sharing of ideas and problems.

⁴ See Marie Russ, *Administration in the YWCA—The Electorate* by Marie Russ (Woman's Press, 1944, 50 cents).

There is a distinct difference between administrative relationships with constituency groups as a regular ongoing arrangement, and relationships in time of crisis. All too frequently, the relationship between administration and clientele grows out of a crisis situation in which clientele becomes a pressure group. Pressure groups may be internal or external to the agency. They may arise as a result of temporary difficulty or they may be interested in achieving basic changes. When there is a good working relationship between administration and the constituency, pressure groups seldom arise. When they do arise it is necessary to endeavor to understand the reasons for the group's formation. Obviously a lack of balance exists. Something is out of tune. There is either real or potential conflict in the offing. Pressures in social agencies seem to represent two situations. Pressure comes when the constituency wants change in the program, facilities, personnel or policy. On the other hand, pressure comes when constituency groups resist change which to them will involve serious loss of privilege, opportunity or status. To put it in another way, pressure groups either want something or object to something. In dealing with these pressure situations four possible solutions present themselves. Administration may acquiesce to the pressure, or administration may fight the pressure group and defeat it. A third solution is that of compromise. In compromise each side wins a little and each side loses a little. Seldom does compromise represent a final solution. The administrator will seek to effect an integrated solution based upon study, factual analysis and cooperative planning. Wherever possible, effort should be made to turn conflict into an opportunity for mutual understanding and the creation of new points of view on both sides.

**Characteristics
of Effective
Group Meetings**

Board and staff meetings are a special kind of social experience. On these occasions the collective strength of the social agency is mobilized for action. If we were to ask board or staff members what makes a meeting good or satisfying to them, we would probably get agreement on the following conditions.⁵

1. A group meeting of board, staff or constituency is most satisfying when it has been carefully planned. An agenda is essential because it sets a progressive speed for the meeting and informs those present what must be accomplished. Whenever possible, copies of the agenda should be made available in advance. If they cannot be circulated they can at least be posted so that everyone may see the order of business. When a meeting is conducted without an agenda the control over the meeting resides in the hands of the chairman. This makes it difficult if not impossible for group members to insert items which they feel are important.
2. A good group meeting is well directed from the standpoint of group thinking. The chairman keeps the meeting moving from problem to problem. The chairman knows how to guide and summarize discussion. The chairman knows how to help people feel at ease and to enter into the discussion.

⁵ *Toward Improved Field Supervision in USO* (United Service Organizations, Inc., 1945). "Some Criteria of Effective Committee Work", Exhibit C, page 83; "Criteria for Training Programs in Staff Conference", Exhibit E, page 84. Hedley S. Dimock, "The Executive as an Educator", in *New Trends in Group Work*, page 182 (Association Press, 1938).

3. It is a good meeting when the time is spent on really worth-while items rather than petty, unimportant non-essentials.
4. It is a good meeting when there is a distribution of participation rather than domination by the chairman or a small minority.
5. It is a good meeting when the members are able to go away from it feeling buoyant rather than tired, inspired rather than bored, directed rather than confused.
6. It is a good meeting when the members feel that it has been a responsible experience for them, and when they feel they have learned something and have made some tangible contribution toward doing the work of the agency.

**How can we improve
our staff, board and
constituency meetings?**

No agency has made such a remarkable record that it could not improve the quality of agency meetings if thought were devoted to the problem. Some of the tentative suggestions which might be advanced can be listed in this order:

1. Our meetings can be improved if first of all we decide intelligently the question of who shall attend. Many meetings have such a wide range of interest and ability on the part of the members that it is impossible to provide a focus which will be uniformly interesting and valuable for all the members. It might be necessary to advance progressively from smaller, sectional meetings of staff and board to the larger meetings involving the whole group.

2. Meetings can be improved if reports presented by individuals are kept at a minimum. When it is necessary to hear individual reports, strict time limit should be set and adhered to, and provision should be made for immediate discussion of the report.
3. Meetings can be improved if special planning committees are adopted. Particularly, if several representatives of the staff are authorized to lay out a program for future staff meetings it will be possible to locate the topics which have the greatest meaning and value for them. This does not imply such complete planning that there will be no opportunity for other items to be considered as the need arises.

Leadership and participation are the essentials in effective group meetings. If administration is to succeed in its efforts to improve the quality of the group experiences of boards, staffs and constituencies, unceasing thought must be given to the process of group action. The suggestions mentioned in the foregoing pages represent a mere start in this direction.

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THE EXECUTIVE FUNCTION WITH GROUPS

chapter three

THE SUCCESSFUL employment of group processes in administration depends upon the understanding and intelligence of its leadership. Groups, more than individuals, require guidance and help to make their experience productive. The workers who carry responsibility for the executive function are both direct and indirect leaders of groups. Definite clear-cut formulations of their responsibilities enhance the group process. Administrative personnel therefore need to rethink their function and understand what is involved in working with groups.

The Nature of the Executive Function

Executives are charged with the task of carrying out the purposes of the agency. Since they cannot do this individually they must inevitably work with and direct individuals and groups. Execution becomes a continuous process of helping people to do specific things for the good of the whole enterprise. Executives are seen as central persons working *with* rather than *over* the others in the organization.

Executive responsibilities have their origins and definitions within the over-all purpose of the agency. In broad general terms the executive functions in relation to groups are:

1. To help groups define, understand and feel the important

purposes of the agency and their particular objectives as a part of over-all purposes. To establish and maintain a dynamic mutuality of purpose on the part of diverse groups is a continuous function of executives. Purposes as words and phrases must be translated into plans and programs if they are to be realistic. The need for maintaining a balance between immediate and long-term objectives is a specific refinement of this function.

2. To help groups recognize and establish the essential conditions which must be provided in the agency and the community if the program of service is to be effective in relation to objectives. This includes directing attention toward the provision of resources, facilities, personnel and working conditions, all of which are important in helping the agency to carry its chosen responsibility.
3. To so organize the total resources of the agency and community that harmonious balanced relationships result. This implies the need to give attention to a pattern of organization and an outline of procedures which will enable all persons and groups to fulfill their specific tasks.
4. To so relate individual and group effort that it can be felt as co-related, coordinated and fundamentally cooperative in behavior. This means the provision of a system of communication and interchange by means of which responsibilities are delegated while the efforts of all are integrated.

The making of purposes, the establishment of conditions, the provision of organization and the coordination of effort are continuous and interrelated. Taken together they represent the

primary function of the executive with groups, which is to develop the skill and competence of all groups concerned with the operation of the agency and to direct their efforts toward satisfactory accomplishment of agency purposes.

Executive Authority — Its Source and Use

Executive positions carry with them a large amount of authority which makes it possible for executives to accept the responsibilities inherent in their jobs. Since it is the responsibility of executives to see to it that the work of the agency is carried on in harmony with either the law or other formal definitions of scope, they want and need the power and right to act in behalf of the whole agency.

When we examine the nature of executive authority we see that it is not arbitrary personal power but functional authorization which comes with the job. It is authority with others rather than over them. It is authority which provides positive expanding freedom of action for the entire staff and board rather than negative limitations imposed from above. Though executive authority is inherent in the situation it not only must be carried but also must be earned. Actually, the executive gets his authority because of his larger experience, deeper insight, greater emotional maturity and more specific education. When the executive accepts the groups with which he works and they accept him, they naturally accept his authority. Authority is thus authority of the group over itself, exercised for the welfare of the group. It is delegated by the group to the executive because they feel it will make possible the achievement of mutually agreed-upon goals. The executive must remember that the way he handles himself and the way he uses his authority will be im-

portant determinants of group behavior. Three uses of executive authority are most evident:

1. The executive uses the authority of his position to define and set limits on his own responsibility and on the responsibility of groups.
2. He uses the authority of his position to help the various groups assume responsibility for specific parts of the whole program.
3. He uses authority to enable the groups to become democratic and more capable of taking larger responsibility.

The Executive-Group Relationship Group leaders help groups to assume and accept their responsibilities

through and because of the kind of relationship they are able to establish. In social group work the professional relationship is a special kind of link, bond or connection between the worker and the group. This relationship enables groups to understand themselves better and helps them to grow secure and competent in their work. The relationship a worker has with his group is a quality of interacting with them. It is a way of thinking, talking and doing things with group members which constantly enables them to see their job more clearly and to act more diligently in its behalf.

The characteristics of an effective executive-group relationship are not unlike the recognized characteristics of an effective worker-group relationship. Executive and group should be acceptable to each other as partners each of whom has important duties to carry. It is a relationship which is accepting, enthusiastic and highly motivated toward the welfare of the whole. The executive is felt to be one who is deeply sensitive to

the needs and feelings of the group members. It is a relationship characterized by a maximum of freedom and a minimum of pressure. It is clearly defined in its expectation and carries within it understood limits of function.

An effective executive-group relationship develops out of what each brings to the situation. The skillful executive brings his understanding of persons and groups, his deep interest in the purposes of the agency, his knowledge of problems and processes of solution, his skill and competence in leading groups, and his own need for self-expression and satisfactions. The members of the group bring special experience and interest in their part of the work of the agency. They bring a need for direction and help, and a need for satisfying productive experiences. When the executive understands what the group needs and endeavors to help it meet these needs, he is beginning to fulfill his most important responsibility. When the group accepts and makes use of executive skill and experience it is beginning to establish a working relationship with him.

Certain professional disciplines are vital prerequisites to development of skill in establishing good working relationships with groups. The executive must be well organized in work habits and give evidence of being able to accomplish a representative volume of work. He must be orderly in his thinking processes. He must be able to establish procedures and routines that will make for a flow of work and a minimum of delay. Particularly important is his ability to establish a pattern or habit of work which makes it possible for people to see the small items of the present in relation to the future of the program. A professional discipline of exceeding importance is an alert flexibility, or capacity to change procedures, to keep pace with new

needs and new developments. Executive leadership, anxious to utilize the participation of other people, must bring a personal capacity for leadership, as well as a firm belief in the worth and value of utilizing the thinking of others.

Some of the specific ways in which the executive is called upon to give direction to groups may be listed as follows:

1. The executive must measure the past experience of groups to judge their proper level of readiness and ability.
2. He must distribute, refer and allocate work to various groups in line with their function in the agency.
3. He must help the different groups to know and understand what the other groups are doing and thus encourage a strong relationship among all of them.
4. He plans the gathering and presenting of factual material for use by various groups.
5. He helps groups to develop confidence in their capacity to take on responsibility by showing them the points at which progress has been made.
6. The executive helps groups to establish methods and procedures of work which give them the realization that certain steps are needed if they are to attain their objectives.
7. The executive gives credit and recognition to groups for the accomplishments they make and helps them advance to higher levels of attainment.

Variations in the Executive Function

The functions of executives vary with the size of the agency. The larger the agency the more complicated the relationship and the more diversified are the functions. In large agencies there is greater distance between the executive and the

outlying groups. The growth of the agency cuts down the degree of directness of executive influence and increases the reliance upon indirect leadership through others. Some of the important variables in agency settings which should be understood because they make significant differences in the job of the executive are these:

1. There are differences in the executive function when the agency is expanding or decreasing its work. This calls for major adjustments in policies and program. In recent years the number of personnel changes among professional and volunteer leaders has tended to accentuate relationships with staff, in so far as placement, orientation and training are concerned.
2. There are differences when the agency is located in a rapidly changing community.
3. The presence of like and unlike agencies in the community may make for variations in the work of the executive.

Growth in Executive Understanding and Skill

It is a real problem to get continuous objective evaluation of executive effectiveness. The staff do not feel that it is their place to render evaluation. The board in many instances is neither equipped nor qualified to give competent appraisal. The executive wants his work to be studied and analyzed because out of such study it is possible to modify methods and "step up" the quality of service. In Chapter VII we shall consider methods and principles of evaluation.

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THE PLANNING PROCESS IN ADMINISTRATION

chapter four

PLANNING IN social work administration is indispensable. The job cannot be done without continuous, thoughtful, comprehensive planning. Though there may be some disagreement on whether planning is a part of administration or a separate and distinct function exclusive of administration, in this discussion we assume the former. This seems to be in harmony with the literature of administration. Furthermore, this position seems to strengthen all the subsidiary functions of administration because planning enters into membership and client selection, personnel and supervision, the creation of structure, the management of plant and equipment, program making, finance and community relations. Planning is common to all these functions. Planning is by its very nature a means of integrating all the separate parts into a related whole.

The Nature of Planning and Its Relation to Administration The nature of planning is frequently obscured by our feelings about it. It is strange but true that many people have a fear of planning because they envision someone else making the plan for them to obey or execute. The fear is not of planning per se but rather a fear of *how* the

planning is done. In the last analysis it is fear of control rather than planning.¹

Obviously, we cannot live our lives a single day without planning. The fact of planning is an established fact. A collective and interdependent society is absolutely and finally dependent upon its planning processes to secure for all its people an increasingly better world.

We may be helped to understand the nature of planning if we think of its opposite. Unplanned administration is haphazard, scattered, disorderly and confusing. Planning is simply the introduction of orderly thinking into areas of life which have heretofore been ruled by unconsidered judgment. Planning is the conscious and deliberate guidance of thinking so as to create logical means for achieving agreed-upon goals. Planning always and inevitably sets priorities and calls for value judgments. Planning is a basic and fundamental approach or way of dealing with the human problems which beset us. Planning is a point of view, an attitude, an assumption that says it is possible for us to anticipate, predict, guide and control our own destiny.

Planning as an Approach, Philosophy and Professional Skill

The alternative to a plan is no plan. When we accept the approach of planning we give expression to our philosophy, or the sum of our beliefs about people and their capacity for controlling the future. It is perhaps pertinent to point out that planning implies a pragmatic realism as contrasted with a mystical fatalism. It means that we believe there are rational forces in sufficient degree to

¹ See "Individualism in a Planned Society" by Mary Parker Follett in *Dynamic Administration, The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett*, Metcalf and Urwick, Editors, op. cit.

enable man to have a place in deciding his future and the future of his institutions. It denies the laissez-faire doctrine of "Let nature take its course," "Everything works out for the best," and "What is going to happen will happen." Facts supplant magic; deliberation replaces inertia. Design, rhythm and relationship emerge to remove the blockings of the mind and the barriers to progress.

If we are to have planning we must have planners. They are the persons who give special attention to the making of plans. They are equipped with highly developed skills of a professional nature. But in a democratic society they do not make the plans; rather they help people to make their own plans by giving aid to the process of planning. The professional worker must know the *questions* rather than the answers. A few of the questions are: What are the needs? What is our function in relation to these needs? What are the most serious gaps, the most acute problems? What are the resources? What coordination of effort is needed? These questions—in terms of professional skill result in five closely related aspects of planning.

FIRST, professional skill is needed in setting up a continuous process by which problems are identified.

SECOND, professional skill is required in setting up a process of fact gathering in order that there will be a free flow of information with reference to the problems.

THIRD, professional skill must be utilized in creating a working method of analyzing the facts as a prerequisite to the formulation of the plan.

FOURTH, the formulation of the actual plan becomes just a moment in the larger process. What goes on before and after is of much larger importance.

FIFTH, professional skill is needed in the laying out of procedures for the implementation of the plan.

The essence of administrative skill in planning thus resides in the leadership of a continuous, well-integrated, step by step process.

This conception of planning carries with it several prominent implications for administration and administrators.

FIRST, we should see time devoted to planning as a thoroughly legitimate part of administration and not an "ivory tower" luxury which we can do without.

SECOND, we should be clear as to the purposes of our planning to avoid the twin hazards of time wastage and unreal conclusions.

THIRD, we should be aware that *everyone*, rather than just a few of the "elite", has a part to play in the planning process.

FOURTH, we thus see our part in planning as leadership designed to set in motion and sustain a process.

FIFTH, to be effective in providing this leadership we must understand the psychological requirements of planning.

SIXTH, the principles of administration are basic to planning as well.

SEVENTH, the essence of good planning is participation. In the balance of this chapter we shall deal with these seven points.

Planning for What? The Relation of Objectives to Planning

In a discussion of social planning the need to consider objectives and the difficulties of so doing are pointed out: "The hardest part of plan-

ning is the statement of objectives. We want them to be at once both realistically obtainable and general enough or high enough to command the loyalties and kindle the aspiration of the multitude. The scientist states his objective in terms of a hypothesis, the statesman in terms of human and social needs, the religious leader in terms which challenge or comfort our searching spirits.”²

Planning, theoretically, cannot be done in a vacuum. There must be objectives. The plan must intend to result in some achievement. But, “It is quite extraordinary how many undertakings and parts of undertakings are discovered which are just going along by their own momentum, with only the very vaguest and most hazy idea of where they’re trying to go or why.”³ This may be a result of our tendency to separate the formulation of objectives from planning. This schism is probably unconscious for many of us because we have accepted a concept of purpose instead of *creating* purposes to match the times. The formulation of aims and objectives is truly an early step in planning, as is suggested in *Administration in the YWCA—Planning*: “The definition of function, statement of aims or objectives or some concrete indication of general agreement about what the specific Association sees as its task becomes an early step in the planning process.”⁴

It is likely that a portion of the confusion which exists as we move into the realities of postwar days is a direct result of our

² Quoted from “Social Planning in the Postwar World” by Charles W. Eliot in *Graduate Studies in a World Reborn*, University of Southern California, 25th Anniversary of the Graduate School and School of Research, 1945.

³ Quoted from *The Elements of Administration* by L. Urwick (Harper, 1943, \$2).

⁴ By Belle Ingels (Woman’s Press, 1944, 50 cents).

inability to formulate a goal to take the place of winning a war. It is true that we have not been conspicuously successful in either national or local planning as the mounting load of human problems threatens to make hollow our resounding victory afield. But, has the planning failed? Or have we left out that vital first step of *deciding for what we plan?*

Objectives are like a map. They show us where we want to go and point out some of the roads we may take to get there. Objectives make concrete and real the things for which we strive. Objectives make it possible for us to evaluate the extent to which we have approached a realization of our fundamental aspirations. Good objectives arise and function within activity. Good objectives guide or control the present—they are useful right now! The formulation of objectives is primarily a job for people who think clearly, who possess a broad appreciation of the enduring heritage of truth but who are gripped with a desire to chart the bold outlines of a better future. We must understand the nature of our broad social situation and the underlying motivations for change.

We must have a familiarity with the community in which we wish to serve because the offerings of our agencies must spring from the desires of the people. This suggests the need to base our objectives firmly upon an evolving conception of the dignity and worth of persons plus knowledge of how all may be helped to larger self-fulfillment. The *function of social work*, the *role of the agency in the community*, the *specific needs of the group*, and the *specific needs of the individual* in the group constitute four areas of thought which attract our attention both separately and in the composite as we set our goals.

When objectives are clear and meaningful the gathering of

facts, the articulation of plans, the presentation of a program and the evaluation of results are greatly influenced. Without objectives these steps can become but mechanistic repetitions of sterile techniques devoid of vital and sustaining substance. The form is present. We go through the motions; but the missing element somehow negates even the most scientific operations. If we are to plan realistically we must take the first step and restate our purposes.

The Psychological Requirements of Planning

The administrator, the staff, the board, the members and the community are all involved in planning. Together they must mature their understanding of the nature of planning and its place in administration. Together they must experience the reality of planning with its difficulties, complexities and satisfactions. Together they must carry their plans into programs of action. Together they must evaluate. However, togetherness does not spring from the innate tendencies of people; rather it must be cultivated and nurtured to the fullest degree. Here the administrative personnel occupy a prominent role. Psychologically they stand as symbols and stimulators for the many with whom they work. They have a responsibility for helping to create a psychological readiness and a positive willingness to plan. In order that they may assume a leadership role it is advisable for them to be clear in their minds. We must understand planning before we can help others to understand it.

FIRST, we must see planning as a positive rather than a negative process. To many of us, planning implies that something is wrong, hence we must plan to right it. It is still true

that we too frequently lock the barn after the horse is stolen. But planning which proceeds from a positive orientation that builds upon *what is right* about a situation and how it can be made more satisfactory is far superior to hunting for the wrongs.

SECOND, we must free ourselves from the fear that planning inevitably results in someone's telling someone else what to do. Because the planning process carries with it the very stuff out of which "collective self-control" evolves, the fear of super-control is groundless. In fact, there is greater danger of submission to outside control when there is an absence of thoughtful planning within.

THIRD, we have the impatient minds among us who loudly call out that what we need is "action" not "more paper plans". In our culture the "doer" seems to command a larger measure of confidence than does the "planner". Perhaps the public relations staffs have some influence here because they stress the doing rather than the planning. It is true beyond any doubt that the "doer" is also a "planner" or that he has some one or some group which does the planning for him. It is true that planning takes time. It is true that "the best of plans sometimes go awry". Plans even "die a-borning". But it is incorrect to allow ourselves to presume that there can be purposeful action without purposeful plans. Nor can we speed up the realization of plans without planning to do so!

FOURTH, we are making a mistake when we compromise at the point of partial planning. For example, many of our plans emphasize the mere changing of the form or structure of society or a unit therein without realizing that the habits and attitudes

of the people must be changed if real progress is to result. Planning must include the setting in motion of educational programs that will strike deeply at the attitudes, habits and social skills of the people who must ultimately help to formulate, accept, carry out and evaluate the entire process.

FIFTH, we have problems of unit size in relation to timing. We want so much for so little! It is prevalent weakness among us to show great regard for the affairs of those far removed and astonishingly little regard for problems which are right in our own backyards. We seem to have a dual time sense when it comes to expressing a wish for speed on the part of the other fellow while simultaneously we remonstrate, "Don't rush us!" As to the unit size of good planning it can be said that it should bear a relationship to the ability, skill and experience of the persons engaged. It is clear that the same considerations enter into expectations in regard to time.

It is helpful to identify some of the basic problems, but it is not enough. We must have an appreciation of the underlying principles which support the planning process. In a large sense these are similar to the principles of administration as outlined earlier. Yet there is a difference in degree if not in kind.

Principles of Participant Planning Out of the experiences of the past we are able to formulate or restate principles of planning which have meaning for the present. Though in no sense exhaustive, this list is an attempt to single out the most important of these principles.

1. To be effective, *planning should grow out of the expressed interests and needs of the persons who compose the*

agency. The agenda for planning should include the ideas of all rather than the imposition of one.

2. To be effective, *those who will be directly affected by the results of planning should have a share in the making of the plan.* This is a longstanding principle of democracy. It is axiomatic that persons are more important than plans and that the meaning of planning in terms of its direct implications for people must be a first consideration.

3. To be effective, *planning must have an adequate factual basis.* It calls for the use of a scientific approach in which the ultimate truths are tenaciously sought after. The extent to which plans are based on facts reflects the reality-orientation of the planners.

4. *The most effective plans have come out of a process which combines face to face methods with the more formal methods of committee work.* Here we have an opportunity to set in motion a network of influences that will make for acceptance and implementation of the plan with a minimum of objective and resistance.

5. *The planning process must be individualized or particularized because of the differences in situations.* Though zealous advocates of specific approaches sometimes give the impression that their way is superior to all other ways, good planning calls for variety and a combination of approaches indigenous to the situation in which we are.

6. *Planning requires professional leadership.* The professional must define her role and help others to understand it.

7. *Planning requires the efforts of volunteer, nonprofessional, community leadership as well as professionals.* The division of responsibility between these groups is a prerequisite to

a satisfactory prosecution of a program. It is necessary to allocate and coordinate these responsibilities as well as to divide and integrate them.

8. *Planning calls for documentation and full recording so that results of discussions and deliberations will be preserved to provide continuity and direction.* It is important to utilize records for purposes of summary and for purposes of evaluation.

9. *Planning should make use of existing plans and resources rather than starting from scratch with every new problem.* It is fundamental to build upon that which we already have, provided it is sound and furnishes a firm foundation.

10. *Planning is dependent upon thinking prior to action.* As *The Elements of Administration*⁶ describes it, "Planning is fundamentally an intellectual process, a mental predisposition to do things in an orderly way, to think before action, and to act in the light of facts rather than guesses."

There can be no denial of the importance of participation in planning. Nor can we refute the fact that the administrator must endeavor to increase substantially his skill in developing the participation powers of people. A forthright examination of the evidence is dismal and discouraging because at the very time when we should be "stepping up" the amount and quality of participation there is a notable and serious falling off. Perhaps it can be contributed to a natural postwar "let down" which will reverse itself once people become rested. This is to be doubted, however, because for a long period of time the trend has been toward increasing centralization and specialization. This is probably inevitable in a complex technological society.

⁶ By L. Urwick (Harper, 1943, \$2).

It cannot be desirable if we are to deepen and make vivid in the lives of people the democratic ideals in which we believe.

As centralization and specialization have increased, the individual has found it more difficult to participate.⁸ Centers of control seem remote. It is hard to get at them. There are no handles which we can grasp and thus pull ourselves into the orbit of influence. So much special knowledge is required that the novice feels inadequate. "Our ideas won't count for anything," we say. All this despite the vast improvements in communication from a scientific standpoint. We have the instruments for communication but we are confused about what we shall communicate and to what end.

If we are to break the bottleneck of nonparticipation it will require an all-out attack on a large scale. The central focus of such an attack must be aimed at the reversal of the trend toward passivity and the cultivation of a new attitude toward the role and significance of all persons and groups. We must begin with a searching analysis of our own agencies to ascertain whether or not we are doing everything within our power to facilitate the intermingling of minds. Here are some of the questions which may well be asked:

To what extent do our members understand the nature of the agency and their obligation to participate? Perhaps we have a job of interpretation to do. To what extent have we established channels of communication so that there is a two-way flow of ideas, opinions, experiences and contributions? It may be that we have yet to set up such avenues of exchange. To what extent do our members, our boards and our staffs possess ability to

⁸ See "The Psychology of Participation" by Gordon W. Allport, the chairman's address to the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, 1944.

participate with ease and effectiveness? It could be that we must do considerably more training in the arts of group thinking, of fact finding and of planning. *To what extent do we organize our work so that units demanding attention are sufficiently clear for participants to see where they may take hold?* It sometimes happens that we expect people to take on jobs which are too large for them to handle. *To what extent does participation with us result in personal satisfaction as well as agency accomplishment?* There may be need for a careful study of the basic human satisfactions received or not received in working together. *To what extent are we able to direct a process of participation so that results can be seen without too much delay?* In the future we might make more use of progress reports, of recognizing step by step gains, even though the ultimate has yet to be achieved.

Participation is a response we make to the compelling demands of our situation. Mary Parker Follett in one of her final papers, "Individualism in a Planned Society" called it "the socially constructive passion in every man". She went on to conclude: "We have talked of our rights. We have guarded our freedom. Our highest virtues have been service and sacrifice. Are we not now thinking of these virtues somewhat differently? The spirit of a new age is fast gripping everyone of us. The appeal which life makes to us today is to the socially constructive passion in every man. This is something to which the whole of me can respond. This is the great affirmative. Sacrifice sometimes seems too negative, dwells on what I give up. Service sometimes seems to emphasize the fact of service rather than the value of the service. Yet service and sacrifice are noble ideals. We cannot do without them. Let them, however, be the hand-

maids of the great purpose of our life, namely, our contribution to that new world we wish to see rise out of our present chaos, that age which shall bring us individual freedom through collective control.”⁷

⁷ Quoted from *Dynamic Administration, The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett*, edited by Henry C. Metcalf and L. Urwick (Harper, 1942, \$3.50).

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WORK WITH COMMITTEES

chapter five

COMMITTEES ARE work groups in which persons in the agency pursue a course of collective thinking toward creative action. Well-selected committees, carefully organized and thoughtfully guided, are basic to administration. To work with committees at a maximum of effectiveness, we must make use of the principles of social group work.

What are some of the established and enduring values of the committee system as a way of work? Well known, but perhaps not always appreciated, is the fact that committee thinking is the only alternative we have to individual thinking. Since we cannot administer our modern, complicated agencies by one-man effort, committees are essential. Committees make for joint planning and joint thinking—always more effective than individual thinking and planning. Committees widen the base of participation and encourage a growth in the number of persons genuinely concerned about the agency. Committees bring together a variety of personnel with different experiences, insights and points of view. Committees can offer creative experience to members and bring about a better understanding of the problems of the agency. Committees serve as a test for the validity of ideas and enable us to avoid mistakes because of judgments which can be brought to bear in advance of action.

Lest it be thought that work with committees is easy, let it be stated that there are limitations, problems and difficulties in committee work. Administrators should know these problems. In *Social Agency Boards and How to Make Them Effective*¹ the author mentions board problems which seem to apply to committees in general. Committees are "frequently an impediment to the simple act of getting something done quickly". He says that some committees become self-perpetuating and controlled by certain dominant individuals. Furthermore, members have accepted committee appointments for motives not always clear. Sometimes committees which continue for too long a time are responsible for "a low standard of efficiency and a handicap to progress". A final disadvantage is, "the lack of centralization of responsibility". Difficulties such as these can be avoided if thought is given to questions such as these, which will be dealt with in the pages that follow:

When should committees be set up and for what purposes?

How should committee members be selected to assure representation of groups, experiences, points of view and skills?

How many persons are needed to do a committee job?

How should we select persons to serve and secure their acceptance?

How should we prepare committee members for service?

What should be done to help the committee determine objectives and methods of work?

What is the relationship between the administrator and the chairman?

¹ By Clarence King (Harper, 1938, \$1.25), pages 16-21.

- Who should plan the committee program?
- How should committee meetings be conducted?
- What kinds of records of committee work should be kept?
- How should reports be prepared and presented for action?
- How should committee members be evaluated as individual participants?
- How should resource material be brought into the committee process?
- How should the total committee effort be evaluated?
- How can the committee process be guided to give persons satisfying experiences in the work of the agency?

Types of Committees and Their Functions *Social Work Administration*² defines the term "committee" thus: "Boards and committees alike are groups of individuals charged with the responsibility for deliberation and decision regarding the work of the social agency." According to *Committee Cues*³: "A committee has been defined as an organizational device for getting work done by a group process. . . . A committee has definite functions and an area of work for which it is responsible and to which it gives specialized, concentrated attention. It has, moreover, an organic relation to and is a recognized part of the whole movement."

In discussing the types of committees usually apparent in the realm of administration it is possible to classify them in several ways. *First*, according to their authorization and status; *second*, according to what the committees do, the functions they

² By Elwood Street (Harper, 1931), page 46.

³ By Lucile Lippitt (Woman's Press, 1944 revised edition, 25 cents), page 3.

perform; and *third*, according to their make-up and organic relationship to the agency.

Under the first category we usually find two main types of committees. The *standing committee* which is provided for by the constitution of the organization to fulfill a long-term or permanent function. Next, the *special committee* also established by the organization to perform a special function or deal with a special problem for a short period of time.

In looking at committees according to what they do or the functions they perform, we see at least three different types. The *advisory committee* whose job it is to give advice and opinions with regard to a problem, situation or idea. The advice may or may not be accepted by the organization seeking it. An example of such a committee would be a group of professional consultants organized by an agency to advise with it in regard to program. Another type of committee is the one devoted to *policy making*. Here committee members are responsible for the formulation of statements of principles which guide the organization; usually policy-making committees are legally established and officially recognized. Still another type of committee is the *administrative* or executive committee charged with the responsibility of carrying out policy for the organization. The executive committee of a board is an example of this as is the finance campaign committee or any other committee with a definite administrative job to do. Committees, then, may give advice, make policy, administer or execute program. The advisory function and the policy-making function have as their foundation a process of study, review and evaluation.

In looking at committees according to the groups from which they come, we see committees of lay persons, committees

that originate and represent groups within the constituency, committees that represent the community but that are not necessarily a part of the agency, committees made up of professional workers on the staff of the agency, committees made up of interagency representatives. Administration requires work with all these different types. Furthermore, in addition to being the chairman of some committees, adviser to others, the administrator is often a committee member. Because of this he must have skills in being a good committee member, chairman and adviser. It is reasonable to suppose that from one-fourth to one-third of the time of the administrator may be spent in work with committees and councils. This includes preparation, conducting meetings, recording and doing individual work needed in the development of committee programs.

The Development of Committees Twenty years ago, Mary Follett said with characteristic brilliance: "The object of a committee meeting is first of all to create a common idea. . . . I go to a committee meeting in order that all together we may create a group idea, an idea which will be better than any one of our ideas alone, moreover, which will be better than all of our ideas added together. For this group idea will not be produced by any process of addition but by the interpenetration of us all."⁴ In this statement lies the basic criterion of committee formation and purpose. Committees should be established by an agency when collective thinking is needed to create a group idea. This concept may seem narrow to administrators who have thought of committees as rubber stamps, as a list of prominent names to bring prestige to the agency, as

⁴ Mary Parker Follett, *The New State* (Longmans, Green, 1926), page 24.

interpreters with influence, as sounding boards for new ideas. These administrators have truly *used* committees rather than guided and directed them so that the committee members will each one be a co-author in a never-ending story of cooperative planning and action. Among the essential criteria of committee use and purpose are these:

Committees should be used when it is clearly indicated that there is a job to be done which can be done better through a group process.

When the task is significant and related to the welfare of the agency in a large way it is appropriate for committees to work on it.

When the problems or the tasks at hand are new, then committees are useful in an exploratory way.

Just as staff members, board members and volunteers need to be selected in accordance with high personnel standards, so must committee members be chosen with the greatest of care. Committees should not be thrown together in a haphazard manner. Some plan of selection is necessary. Throughout the literature on the selection and development of committees *diversity* seems to be a key word. *Group Leadership*⁵ reminds us: "Diversity wherever possible should be a major concern in the creation of committees or other small deliberating groups . . . but members should not be too unequal in their knowledge and experience in relation to the problems considered."

To be effective, a group should meet certain definite characteristics. We know that the members must have a clear understanding of the purpose of the group, why it exists and what it is supposed to accomplish. Is this not one criterion of a good

⁵ Robert D. Leigh, *Group Leadership* (W. W. Norton, 1936, \$2.50), page 59.

committee? *Clarity of purpose is essential in committee work.*

We know that group members must be compatible to a certain degree and that they must feel a part of the group. Is this not another essential? *The composition of our committees is of great significance.*

We know that groups require leadership skilled in the art of helping people relate to one another and to the tasks at hand. Is chairmanship not one of the keys to the committee? *Chairmen must be carefully selected and trained.*

We know that group meetings must have a program, must be well planned and well conducted, must amount to something important in the eyes of the members. *Certainly a well-planned and well-conducted agenda is a requirement of the good committee meeting.*

To survive, to prosper, to develop, we realize that members must receive basic satisfactions from their group experience. These basic satisfactions are felt when needs are met. *The committee member also has needs which she desires to have met,* at least partially, through her work on the committee group.

Selection of the committee depends upon the persons available to do the task. We should build committees composed of persons representative as to experience, insight, point of view or opinion, geographic distribution, age, relationship to the agency and skill or knowledge about the subject at hand. It should be kept in mind that every person does not have the ability to think and work in a group, nor do all of us have the same amount of such an ability. It is important for the administrator to know every committee member as an individual because a person should be sought for a committee only if she has something to contribute.

The first thing to be understood is that individuals differ in their capacity to relate themselves to others in the group setting. For some it is easy to become actual participants, to think aloud and to work with group members. For others, group experience is fear inspiring and extremely difficult. If they are invited to be of service on committees, they need wise help in orientation, else the experience may be too much for them. We have tended to do too much "putting people on committees" without regard for their feelings about the matter. Not only have we been careless and discourteous; we have been guilty of engendering many real problem-producing situations. *Everyone does not belong on a committee. We have no right to "talk" people into committee jobs for which they really have no skill.*

Individuals make different uses of the same group situations. Committee members accept committee responsibilities for a variety of reasons. They "go to committee" because, by so doing, certain deep human needs may be met. We must endeavor to understand the real meaning of the committee to the member, if we are to show skill in using human motivations for group aims.

Individuals go through a process of gaining acceptance and status in every group to which they belong. Having achieved them, they desire to maintain both. For many the status need is exaggerated. They are the ones who always have to carry excess responsibilities, who always speak on every issue, who always must be consulted before any action is taken. They are interested in the group, to be sure, but their feeling with regard to what they get out of it cannot be ignored. Some of our committee members inadvertently keep others off the committee because of their own great need to dominate every situation.

It is bad practice to place persons on committees "to educate them". Unless they have a contributing role the experience cannot be very meaningful. Frequently overlooked is the fact that committee composition often changes after the committee has been under way for some time. New members will be added to fill vacancies or to bring in persons with other experience and other points of view. Committees can be kept dynamic if this is done with the same care as the original grouping received.

A question which can be answered only in terms of the local situation is the *size* of the committee. How large should committees be? Some would answer no larger than necessary, others would say large enough to get the job done, still others would say as large as possible. The guiding factors are again the tasks to be done and the process envisaged. If committees are to create group ideas through the interpenetration of thought, then the committee should be no larger than necessary because the group process will be affected if the number becomes too great. Also, if the social worker is concerned about the growth of committee members as persons as well as about getting a job done, then it will be necessary for us to keep the committees small enough so that we shall know each individual member. The educational process can succeed only under conditions favorable to deliberation. Small groups are better deliberating groups.

Defining the Committee Member's Job The responsibility for *inviting* persons to serve on committees and securing their initial acceptance and motivation is a first step in good committee process. Committee members should know from the very start "what they are getting into". It is probably desirable in large agencies to give com-

mittee members a written invitation. The letter should outline the job to be done. It should indicate the amount of time it will take and indicate when and where the committee will meet. If possible it should include the names of the others who are already members or who will be invited. Because interim work is so important for most committees it should be discussed also. Finally, the letter should indicate why the person being invited has been chosen, what she has in experience, opinions and skill to contribute to the collective work of the committee.

After deciding that a committee is necessary and after selecting the members in terms of representation and after inviting and securing the services of committee members who have been somewhat prepared for service, the committee is ready to get the work under way. It is the responsibility of the administrator to make certain that ultimate and immediate objectives are understood. The steps in the process should be outlined. Satisfactory conditions of committee work, such as room, supplies, secretarial service, should be provided. The first meeting of a committee often "makes it or breaks it". Great care and exceeding skill should be brought to bear from the outset, in order that the group may make a good start.

The Administrator's Relation to the Committee

The administrator must define his relationship to the committee which is generally threefold. *First*, he is related to the committee as a group; *second*, he is related to the individuals of the committee; *third*, he is related to the committee chairman. The relationships are different from the relationships the administrator holds with other groups in the agency. Committees have a specific responsibility, a job to

get done; otherwise they fail and the experience is not satisfying. Thus, the worker's role must take shape around this double-headed objective of getting a job done by means of a process that will contribute to the growth and satisfaction of committee members. The worker's role will vary in different situations. The kind of problem, the availability of resources, the skill and experience of committee members, are variables that must be taken into account. Usually the role takes shape in one of the two major ways. *First*, the administrator may be an expert adviser and resource person. *Second*, he is perhaps the executive secretary responsible for implementing the decisions agreed upon. Each of these roles is exercised in situations such as:

- planning the program with the chairman and the committee;
- conducting the committee meeting;
- maintaining records of committee work;
- writing and submitting reports for action;
- selecting and introducing resource material;
- gathering facts upon which to base judgments;
- evaluating committee members as individuals;
- evaluating committee efforts as a whole.

Committee program is not merely a matter of mechanics, though mechanics are important. Basically, the administrator is responsible for seeing to it that sound process is followed. This process consists of defining the problem, discussing the problem, presenting opinions, ideas and facts relative to solving the problem, summarizing the discussion and, finally, integrating the ideas into a plan of action.

The relationship between the staff member and the chairman begins when the chairman is appointed or chosen for the responsibility. Ordinarily the worker who has charge of a de-

partment, section or agency, is looked upon by the committee chairman as an expert person who may be used as a resource or as the executive who carries out decisions. The worker must understand the chairman as an individual with a particular function to perform. It should be said that workers and chairmen may establish such a close relationship that in reality they *run* a committee. This is illustrated by an executive who said, "Mr. X, my chairman, and I got together before the meeting, and everything went through just as we wanted it." Or, as another administrator said, "It was a splendid committee meeting; all my points were approved." If this is the case, why have a committee?

In looking more specifically at the administrator's job in relation to the chairman and the committee, he seems to be responsible for the following definite activities:

He should discuss and clarify the purpose and function of the committee. He should assist the chairman in defining the major problem and the subproblems.

He should study the composition of the committee and help the chairman in the selection of members. He should especially help the chairman to understand the individual personalities.

He should consider with the chairman the various approaches to the problem, possible steps in the process and the need for factual material and exhibits.

The worker should always discuss the items on the agenda and assist in the preparation and arrangement of the agenda.

Suggestions on ways of handling problems that may come up in the meeting can be given.

The chairman may want help in evaluating the accomplishments of the committee.

The worker should be willing to evaluate the chairman and the work he has done.

The Job of the Chairman In connection with evaluation of the chairman, *The Art of Leadership*⁶ gives us much help. Here the chairman is seen as operating at his best: (1) when he states problems and issues clearly, and breaks them down into small parts which can be handled; (2) when he asks questions to bring out the facts; (3) when he clarifies meanings and encourages statements of different points of view; (4) when he separates major from minor differences and distinguishes between conflicts of attitudes and misunderstandings of statements; (5) when he keeps the focus and directs discussion toward eventual solution. Committee chairmen are the key people in the committee process.

The chairman of a committee is a group leader and must be emotionally secure, within himself, if he is to help the members achieve a sense of security in the group. Committee meetings which "get emotional" or in which "people's feelings get hurt" reflect a prominent lack in chairmanship. Furthermore, chairmen or committee members who have to be protected unduly, or "handled with kid gloves", lack the maturity called for in group thinking.

The chairman must be able to face life experiences in a positive outgoing manner. Some years ago, a quip in a popular magazine charged, "A committee is a group of individuals who alone can do nothing, therefore, they get together to decide that

⁶ Ordway Tead, *The Art of Leadership* (McGraw, 1935, \$2.50), page 192.

nothing can be done!" Negativism is one of the grave problems in the life of a group. Negativistic members are intolerable in the committee group. A negativistic chairman is impossible.

The chairman must have wider experience than the others in the group but not be too radically different from them. In giving leadership, he must proceed at a pace which is comfortably familiar to the group members and which respects their right to self-determination. That fine balance between "running a committee" and "letting the committee run itself" is difficult to achieve. It does not help to tell a group, "Now this is your committee. What is your wish?" The emphasis should be upon "our" and "ours" rather than "yours" and "mine".

The chairman must have a long-time perspective and point of view. The process of orderly group thinking is not easy. Many barriers stand in the way. Quite frequently, committee groups meet only spasmodically, and absence of continuity may be a major factor in the experience of the members. A chairman who is able to construct the future in terms of objectives and approaches gives greater stability to the group.

Planning and Conducting the Program with the Committee

The plans discussed and made by the administrator and the chairman can and should go only so far. The committee as a whole must do the major planning and must make all decisions. Here the administrator discovers his role as a member of the committee. He will want to participate like any other person in the group. Sometimes he will do an individual job of interpretation with groups or factions within the committee. The most common responsibilities of the administrator with the committee are:

He is responsible for conditions of time, place and organization of committee meetings.

The preparation and presentation of necessary factual and other resource materials may come within his scope.

He may be called upon by the chairman to restate the problem, clarify issues or summarize the discussion.

He assumes responsibility for maintaining the record and the preparation of the report.

He works with subcommittees.

In connection with the last item, when should subcommittees be used? With what peculiar types of problems should they deal? How should they be set up? Who should supervise them?

There are two kinds of subcommittees. *First*, the subcommittee that is a recognized standing committee of a larger committee. *Second*, the subcommittee that is a special committee organized to perform a task, report its decision and disband. It is with this latter type that thought must be exercised. The subcommittee can become a device to halt deliberation and postpone integrated group action. For example, if a conflict arises and after much struggling there is still considerable difference, we may decide to turn the problem over to a subcommittee. When we do this, it means that we must be sure to take back the compromise solution to the entire committee for action so that the difference will be resolved by the whole committee.

Under some circumstances the subcommittee is desirable. Some items do not have to be discussed by a whole committee.

The use of subcommittees is legitimate and desirable when the job to be done is in the realm of fact gathering.

The use of subcommittees is desirable when certain members need to work on preliminary exploratory thinking.

Subcommittees are valuable to draft reports, or construct instruments of inquiry such as questionnaires.

It must be kept in mind that the subcommittee device should be used when it will facilitate the more complete and effective functioning of the committee. If using it tends to short-circuit discussion it is unfortunate. Subcommittees need careful choosing and supervising because they are small and it is hard to get good representation. Subcommittees should always report back to and be guided by the larger committee. The subcommittee with power to act may be an expedient but is generally undesirable. To create subcommittees just to give people "something to do" is ridiculous. In fact, the whole idea often expressed that to make a committee member work he must be given an individual job to do seems fallacious. Committee work is group work, and individual assignments are of the least importance.

Records of Committee Work The minutes of committee meetings and the reports of committee thinking and action are the two major forms of committee records. Usually the worker is responsible for them though he need not do the actual writing. The committee minutes should be kept according to the purposes they are designed to serve. Among the purposes are: to be a permanent record of deliberation and action; to evaluate committee process and participation; to summarize agreements and progress in order to refresh members prior to the next meeting; to be a basis for reports.

Presumably everything written is to be read by someone. Minutes are of little value unless they are used. A file of committee minutes is worthless unless they are prepared carefully

and accurately so that members will study them. Committee chairmen should encourage additions and corrections to the minutes, and effort should be made to use short, concise statements showing summaries of action. Frequently it will be desirable to maintain full-process minutes, depending upon the assignment of the committee, where it is in its work, and its past history.

Many of the same considerations enter into the report question. For whom is the report intended? What is its purpose? What is to be accomplished because of it? These questions must be answered and in so doing the style of the report will be determined.

Use of Resource Material The staff member who has the responsibility of preparing and presenting material for committee examination and study has a major duty. While it is true that ideas and opinions are the main substance of committee materials, facts carefully documented and attractively displayed are needed to facilitate thinking and to bring about wise decisions. The staff member exercises judgment in the light of the need of the committee for resource material, their readiness to assimilate and understand it, and the nature of the problem under discussion. He should always be certain of the accuracy, source and authenticity of the data presented. Tables should have interpretative material. Charts likewise must be explained. Visual aids are best if it is possible to visualize the problem. Written material should be kept simple and should not be given out in too great a quantity. It is well to present material for discussion so that the meeting time will not have to be given over to reading. The administra-

tor and the chairman will encourage committee members to participate in the preparation of interesting factual resource data.

Resource persons are often brought before the committee to present opinions, facts or suggestions. Great care must be exercised in using resource persons to see that they know what is to be discussed and to see that the committee is prepared to receive them.

Evaluating Committee Members as Individuals What is it that leads us to exclaim, "Mr. X is a fine committee member"? Is it because he attends the meetings, participates intelligently, reads the minutes of the meetings, makes motions, sticks to the topic? How should staff members go about evaluating committees? Should they evaluate the experience of each individual committee participant? It seems that we must do this. It seems also that the committee members would want to know if they are contributing to group thinking. As to methods, self-evaluation, group evaluation, and individual evalution with the administrator are possibilities. The following questions are intended to help us in *evaluation of individual committee members:*

1. To what extent do committee members attend meetings regularly and promptly?
2. To what extent do committee members participate in the discussions and decision making?
3. To what extent is the individual able to think in a group and express himself freely under group conditions?
4. To what extent is the committee member able to under-

stand the point of view of others and to accept differences?

5. To what extent does the committee member show an understanding of the issues or problems presented?
6. To what extent does the committee member make contributions out of his experience?
7. To what extent has he done the interim work assignment?
8. Does he come to the meetings with advance preparation so that he enters into the discussion promptly?
9. Does the committee member keep the discussion impersonal and directed to the issues rather than personalities?

**Evaluating
the Committee
as a Group**

One of the best ways to discover how people sometime feel about committees is to listen to conversations in the elevator, the lobby or the coffee shop after the meeting is over.

Have you ever heard such remarks as these?

“Another meeting and we didn’t get anything done!”

“We waste so much time on trivial matters!”

“People just won’t stay on the track!”

“We did our job, but our report has not been acted upon!”

“We have no real authority; important decisions are made at the top.”

“We have too much responsibility; our committee cannot do what is asked!”

“Always the same busy people! Why don’t we get some new persons on our committee?”

“We can’t find anybody to take the chairmanship!”

“Oh! That item got buried in a subcommittee, I suppose!”

"I still don't know just what our committee is supposed to do!"

To be sure, these snatches of conversation may be simple, petty irritations and of only temporary meaning. If, however, feelings of this kind are commonplace and continuing, then something must be done. Administrators must constantly endeavor to improve work. They must test and measure results. Studies of minutes and records are needed. Studies of individual members to see whether they are doing a good committee job are essential. What makes committee experience satisfying to committee members? What are the factors in good committee work? The following questions are listed as an aid to *group evaluation of committees*.

1. Is the committee purpose clearly stated and written; do all members have a copy of it?
2. Is the committee purpose thoroughly understood?
3. Is the committee composition representative of experience, points of view and ability?
4. Are committee officers well selected, and do they function efficiently?
5. Are committee members regular in their attendance?
6. Do the committee members work well together as a group?
7. Have all committee members participated so that genuine group thinking results?
8. Are records maintained and circulated to committee members?
9. Are reports written, presented, distributed and acted upon?
10. Is a written agenda prepared and sent in advance?

11. Is work divided into manageable units so that accomplishment is seen periodically?
12. Are meetings conducted efficiently by the chairman?
13. Are resource materials and persons used wisely to meet needs?
14. Are the committee program and process evaluated regularly?

Committee members have a satisfying experience when they feel that they are doing something worth while and are doing it efficiently. Continuous evaluation of committee work by means of such questions as these will yield a richness in understanding and increase the basic satisfactions so necessary for every member. For most of us, working with a committee is not a matter of techniques but basically a matter of satisfaction which we get from doing the job. We know when we feel right about a group. We know when we are accomplishing something. Most of us need at least five basic satisfactions to come out of our group efforts: FIRST, we must feel the importance of our work and see its relationship to the enduring purpose of the agency; SECOND, we must feel a sense of fellowship, a sense of belonging with like-minded people committed to a responsible task; THIRD, we must have a feeling of personal growth and achievement, so that our job is exciting and expanding; FOURTH, we need appropriate recognition and commendation for work well done; FIFTH, we need to see the results of our group ideas in terms of vital influences within all phases of agency operation.

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ADMINISTRATION AND THE COMMUNITY

chapter six

New Relationships Between Agencies and Communities

Social work has changed from an agency to a community orientation. The interdependence of all social agencies each with the other and with like community services is an established fact. The job of providing community services cannot be done on a basis of separation. In the shift of social work orientation from agency to community the administrative function and process are undergoing great changes. As a new and deeper relationship between agency and community develops it is necessary to study administration from the community point of view. In reality, this community point of view has been evolving in much the same manner as has been our understanding of administration. Now we realize that to think of social work administration only in terms of internal organization is fallacious. It is necessary to realize anew that social agencies operate in the midst of a vast number of community groups and forces. They never operate in a vacuum, seldom singly, but always in relation to other agencies.

The number of groups in the community which have common human needs are increasing. For years we have said that social agencies exist to meet the needs of individuals, and that these needs, taken in the composite, represent community needs. Today individual needs merge and the need-constellation of the

community is a group phenomenon. Social agencies must have keen understanding and close identification with their community groups if needs are to be recognized and met. Administration is responsible for giving creative leadership in this area. Apart from the matter of program, social agencies can exist only when they receive support and sanction from the community, particularly the large part of the community which receives little in the way of direct and tangible service. Furthermore, we are increasingly aware of the fact that agency *staff*, *board* and *constituents* — the basic administrative triad — are themselves part and parcel of the community. Their contacts with diverse groups and organizations can help to make the agency vital and strong if utilized. Finally we are coming to the slow but sure realization that ultimate control of our social agencies must inevitably reside in the hands of the community, and administration is seeking ways of making itself more democratic in the fullest sense of the word.¹

**Types of
Relationship
and Interaction**

Since all social agencies establish a relationship of some kind with their community it is the responsibility of administration to locate and define the areas of relationship that are essential to good operation. As much time should be devoted to the study and analysis of the agency's relationship with the community as has gone into the study of personnel policies, supervision and other internal matters. Four areas stand out with clarity and prominence.

¹ See Division of Education and Recreation, Council of Social Agencies of Chicago, *Report of Committee on Democratic Administration—Can Our Administration Be Democratic?* (1942).

1. *Administration is responsible for giving leadership in determining the function of the agency.* This is a task of defining and redefining. To do it requires a method of determining community needs. Two-way channels of communication are called for. In a sense, the agency must operate on the same wave length as do predominant groups in the community.

2. *Administration is responsible for giving leadership in securing support, developing interpretation and maintaining understanding.* This task is continuous. It requires interaction with the whole community.

3. *Administration is responsible for giving leadership in relating the agency and service to other agencies of identical or allied purposes.* This may take specific form, such as in projects of joint service. It may operate in the realm of planning or in the realm of professional standards. In either event, the administration of the agency must assume a large share of the responsibility for weaving a fabric of community service and, in so doing, for pulling together the strands of professional and volunteer effort.

4. *Administration is responsible for giving leadership in evaluation.* Appraisal of the work of the agency is a necessity. The community must feel that an agency is doing an essential task and doing it with a quality that is constantly improving. Agency administration which is not close to its community has a hard time making a sound appraisal.

The successful operation of a social agency today depends upon the way in which administration establishes and maintains these community relationships. Relating the agency to the community and the community to the agency is a process of interaction of persons. It is a two-way process requiring planning,

direction and leadership. Four types of interaction are evident:

1. Action from the *agency* to the community on a *permanent* or standing basis is a primary concern of administration. For example, most agencies have the responsibility of selecting board, constituents or staff to represent them on Councils of Social Agencies, and similar planning groups. Frequently two or more agencies work together on projects designed to meet a particular community need. In such cases, when initiative is taken by the agency and it extends itself out into the community, there is need for administrative planning and decisions regarding delegates, representatives and the part the agency should play.

2. Action from the *agency* to the community on a *temporary* basis is another type of interaction. Agencies are called upon to explain their budgets to budget committees of Community Chests. Agencies are at times working with other agencies on conference committees which have the job of planning and conducting an educational program. Now and again there is a program of interpretation or a public hearing which puts the agency, through its administration, in particular relationship with the community, even though only temporarily. Sometimes these temporary connections are less well planned and carried through than are the permanent relationships. They are often more important than the standing relationships and should be planned just as thoroughly.

3. Action from the *community* to the agency on a *permanent* or lasting basis is the reverse of type one. For example, an agency may have an advisory committee made up of appointed representatives. Organized labor, religious federations, taxpayers' groups and many others may appoint delegates to an

agency committee. In such cases the delegates represent a certain segment of the community coming in contact with the agency and reporting back to the group that sends them. In a very real sense the community is furnishing some of the data for administrative decisions.

4. Action from the *community* to the agency on a *temporary* basis is the reverse of type two. Often pressure groups bring weight to bear on social agencies regarding policy, budgets, personnel and other items. The interaction in these cases may be highly charged with emotion, and difficult to utilize for full benefit. Though temporary in the beginning, such action may develop into a permanent or lasting kind.

Regardless of the type of action, its origin, basis or duration, it is during these periods that agency administration is identifying itself most closely with the community. In all four types it is necessary to establish and maintain two-way communication lines. In all four types it is necessary to remember that interaction is between persons, the agency as represented by persons and the community as represented by persons. The need for planning and guidance is obvious.

**Achieving
Administrative
Balance**

There is no doubt that social agencies face an important but difficult task as they strive for a balance between separate and cooperative programs. In a world which is changing with a swiftness hard to calculate, social agencies inevitably have more work to do. But it may be a different kind of work. It is necessary to realize this. To be sure, each individual agency has a specific function to fulfill. Equally certain is the fact that some of the needs and some of the problems today are so great

that allied agencies must work together not only on the planning but on the operating levels. Agency administration must exercise great ability, then, (1) in determining the primary function of the agency and (2) in locating those areas in which it will join with other agencies on the direct service level. When decisions are made, they quite certainly result in some kind of balance between agency and community. The right kind of balance is what we all hope to achieve. It can be achieved only through the most skillful relating of agency to community. Agency administration which usually has primary control over policy, budget, program and personnel is the natural leadership for this venture. Fortunately, most social agencies have at least four distinct groups which can combine to serve as the means by which agency and community may be related and integrated: (1) the professional staff; (2) the board and committee leaders; (3) the constituents or participants in the agency's program or service; (4) the public at large. The way in which the agency head works with the first and second groups is surpassed in importance only by the way he combines all four into an effective balanced unit.

Administration must realize that it faces the twofold task of leading personnel so that (1) there is an agency *internal* balance between individuals and groups, and (2) an *external* balance between the persons within the agency and the community. This will lead administration to change from the position of doing a *minimum* of things together with other agencies to the doing of an *optimum* of things with other agencies for the improvement of the whole community.

The job analysis of all workers carrying administrative responsibilities should include specific time for community activi-

ties. All too often work with other agencies has been incidental or "extracurricular". Attendance at meetings, work on committees and participation in community events have come before or after and in addition to so-called "regular" agency activities. This has tended to relegate community participation to a minor or secondary role. Actually, the time that staff and board give to community activities in the field of social work should have the same value and importance as time spent on purely agency affairs.

**Executive, Staff
and Board in
Community Relations**

Administration is primarily the leadership of persons. The persons on the staff of the social agencies usually carry responsibility for direct service to individuals and groups. In addition, most staff workers have other contacts with the community. They serve as representatives on community councils, plan conference programs, make community studies, write publicity, participate in fund-raising drives, study and vote on legislation, and in countless ways become a part of all that surrounds them. Several items stand out in connection with this part of the professional's job:

1. Executive and staff must give thought to the framing of a community strategy. Groups and organizations from which they wish representatives and upon which they wish to be represented should be listed, and definite plans made.
2. Assignments of staff members to community activities should be planned with regard to their total work load and should be included in job analyses.
3. A plan should be worked out for utilizing the rich con-

tributions that come from staff participation in inter-agency activity. The different staff workers who work on various cooperative enterprises should have means and opportunities for sharing the learnings with other staff members. In this way values will be greatly increased.

4. Executives must provide the conditions under which staff members will develop skill in community relations.

In much of the literature addressed to both the board member and the administrator who works with boards we see an emphasis on how to achieve maximum effectiveness of operation within the agency itself. It is now suggested that administrators give attention to guiding the development of board members so that in addition to being staunch proponents of the agency they become equally valuable at the point of broad overall community service. Administrators face a task quite similar to a military commander who has done a fine job of developing separate units and who must now draw them together into a unified striking force. To be successful the commander must be sure that these separate units understand not only their own function but also the functions of all the other units.

Administrators must first of all clear their own feelings about this task. Anyone who has gone through the difficult routine of locating, recruiting, developing and guiding board and committee heads knows that once in hand they are jewels to be treasured. The thought of releasing them, even leading them out into wider avenues of community enterprise, is apt to be disconcerting to say the least. It is hard to see that they will continue to be as valuable to the agency as before, and perhaps they will not be. However, social agency administrators have long said that a part of social work's job is the preparation of

community leaders. Perhaps they really mean *agency* leaders. It seems both evident and inevitable that social work administrators and laymen must begin at once to consider our personnel as a pool, and develop programs of training which will provide workers trained not only for a separate agency but for wide community service in total community organizations. The prerequisites of such a program are numerous:

1. Board members must be selected with greater care, and real attention should be given to securing wide and genuine representation and balance from all groups.
2. Board members must be thoroughly oriented to the function of the agency and all other related agencies in the community.
3. Administrators must help board members to understand that patterns of relationship between agencies are changing as the community changes. A joint board and staff committee on community relations is probably needed by most agencies.
4. Board members must be made aware of their responsibility to their colleagues and coworkers to help keep the agency in touch with community thought and action as a necessary prerequisite to policy making.
5. Board members who represent the agency on social welfare planning groups require special training for this critical responsibility. In part, it should consist of: (a) knowledge of the council or community organization to which they go; (b) understanding of responsibility and authority as an agency representative in the new setting to which they go; (c) avenues of reporting back to the local agency. Going to endless committee meetings is not

community planning. Only through engaging in *creative effort* can we feel the importance of it. Administrators have a duty to see to it that representatives from their agency have a good experience when at work on community projects.

6. Each board member should know some of the tests of community organization. Just as she is expected to know good administration and has assumed a trustee relationship to it, the board member must be helped to recognize good community organization. From experience in the child welfare field is proposed this excellent general test: "The test of community organization is not in any program or interrelationships or coordination of programs, but in the presence of a continuing public interest which realizes professional ideals by making possible sound professional practice."²

These may be considered guideposts for the preparation of board members to meet the challenge of the community.

**Testing Administrative
Process in
Community Relations**

This list of criteria has been selected for use by those social work administrators who wish to evaluate their administration in relation to the new community orientation of social work:

1. To what extent does the agency have up-to-date information and basic social facts about the community for use in policy making and program planning?
2. To what extent does the agency have a method of arriv-

² Norris E. Class, "Child Welfare Services and Community Organization", *Social Service Review*, June 1942, page 249.

ing at an *understanding* of emergent social needs brought about by community changes?

3. To what extent are sound communication lines maintained between the agency and community organizations?
4. To what extent are board members representative of the entire community?
5. To what extent does personnel administration include orientation to the community in the induction process for new staff and board members?
6. To what extent do job analyses include specific itemized reference to community participation and leadership?
7. To what extent does agency administration make a conscious effort to see itself as the community sees it?⁸
8. To what extent do training programs for board and staff include some of the content of community organization and how to participate effectively?
9. To what extent is the agency working with other agencies in common projects?

⁸ Read Arthur Swift, *Make Your Agency More Effective* (Association Press, 1941, \$3), page 226.

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EVALUATION OF GROUP PROCESSES IN ADMINISTRATION

chapter seven

AS STATED in the first chapter, it is the primary function of administration to provide leadership of a continuously helpful kind so that all persons engaged in the manifold workings of the agency may advance the agency to ever more significant service and accomplishment. Continuous evaluation of administrative processes with groups is therefore a necessity.

By evaluation of administration we mean appraisal or judgment of the worth and accomplishment of all the procedures designed to enable the agency to accomplish its objectives. Evaluation is essentially the study and review of past operating experience. It implies critical analysis of the quality of the relationships which have been developed between all groups. It implies a willingness to measure results and to make changes in both goals and methods as a result of considered evidence. Evaluation becomes a resource for the continuous strengthening of all the individuals and groups in the agency setting.

It is important that administration be examined in the same way we evaluate program. Administration is one of the resources for program and it generally controls program extent and quality. Though it may be argued that we cannot evaluate administration apart from program, too often we try to evalu-

ate program without studying the way it is administered. It should be pointed out that evaluation of administration means more than evaluation of administrators though they are one focus of such efforts. Every administrator should furnish tangible evidence of the effectiveness of the processes he uses. The true point of concentration in administrative appraisal is the way the agency groups work together.

Reasons for Evaluation There are five reasons for systematic evaluation:

1. Well-conducted evaluation enables us to discover to what extent our groups separately and together have accomplished their mutual objectives. In such accomplishment it can be assumed that services are being provided which meet the recognized needs of the constituency.
2. Evaluation enables our groups to summarize the results of work together. They are helped to see both strengths and weaknesses and are enabled to discover points at which they need to alter their procedures.
3. Well-planned evaluation helps us to formulate new objectives and to renew our dedication to older objectives not yet attained.
4. Evaluation often forces us to adjust and modernize our methods, thus avoiding the perpetuation of old patterns. A rethinking of administrative procedures is frequently the result of the evaluation program.
5. Evaluation can be a stimulation to greater professional growth. It can be an extension of the learning process because its very nature is scientific and its aim is educational.

Basic Assumption As a means of preparing administrators and groups for the acceptance of an evaluative point of view in their work it may be helpful to review certain basic assumptions or principles which underlie evaluation of group activity generally.

1. It is assumed that evaluation is an important step in all group activity and a component part of good administration.
2. Evaluation of group activity must be done in the light of objectives or qualities of group performance we are attempting to achieve.
3. Evaluation must come out of the actual experiences of people working together and, like good administration, must be conducted on a cooperative and democratic basis.
4. The best evaluation is continuous rather than periodic. It has its roots in the desire to improve each situation without waiting for specific review periods.
5. It is assumed that evaluation is directed primarily toward the improvement of the experiences of groups and, as a result of this improvement, toward a better service for the clientele.

Evaluation thus calls for agency leaders who are alert, inquiring and analytical. Their devotion to their work is real because of their willingness to study and improve upon it.

Steps in the Evaluation Process Though evaluation must be related to specific groups in specific situations, some of the steps in the total process would seem to apply no matter which agency or organization is in-

volved. When we set out to study, evaluate or do research, we need a clear understanding of the objectives of our agency. With clarity at this point the entire job of evaluation is made easier in focus and in process. Beyond objectives we must establish criteria of professional practice for use in judging the results of our work. This takes time but there is no short cut. Having worked out criteria we must think about and state the nature of the evidence for which we are searching as a manifestation of our basic criteria. At this point it becomes necessary to make a choice of the specific parts of administration we intend to study and see the part we have chosen in relation to other problems which may be studied at a later time. A good problem for study is one which holds a maximum of interest for the group called upon to make the study. Good problems can be stated clearly and in terms of an hypothesis.

At this point we are ready for the creation of instruments which we shall use in analyzing our experience and collecting data. Instruments such as questionnaires and schedules call for a substantial amount of technical skill in construction. It is important that these instruments be simple and direct in application. Our next step is the collection of facts by means of our instruments. After collection, then comes analysis.

It is at this point that group discussion is especially needed. It is not surprising that a variety of meanings are often attached to the same sets of data. Interpretation, summarization and the drawings of findings must be considered as a step prior to the making of recommendations. Once recommendations have been made, the application of such recommendations and their use as reflected by changes in objectives and practices round out the process and start us on a new study.

Some Sample Criteria for Evaluation Though it is not possible to present a lengthy list of criteria for evaluation of group processes in administration, this list of ten points may lend itself to elaboration.

1. To what extent are all the groups in the agency achieving a growing understanding of the underlying purposes for which the agency exists?
2. To what extent are all the groups participating in the processes of policy formulation?
3. To what extent are all groups organized for effective assumption of their specific responsibilities?
4. To what extent does each of the groups understand and appreciate the specific responsibilities of the other groups?
5. To what extent do all groups have, and do they make use of, channels of communication with one another?
6. To what extent are groups provided with leadership capable of developing group unity and bringing out the capacities of the members for participation?
7. To what extent do groups utilize operating procedures to make their work experience productive and satisfying for the agency and the group members?
8. To what extent do the groups maintain adequate records of meetings, studies and other activities?
9. To what extent have the groups evaluated their operating procedures and made modifications in keeping with new materials on objectives and methods?
10. To what extent are groups creating a conscious and growing unity with one another so that there is a feeling of cooperative responsibility for the whole agency?

Some Study Suggestions Among the various kinds of studies which might be made as a means of increasing our knowledge of the group processes in administration are the following:

1. How much time does the administrator devote to preparing for, working with and following up groups. What is a reasonable group load for administrators?
2. What is the attendance record and participation score for members of administrative groups?
3. Is there a relationship between size of group and satisfactions received by members? How large can a group be and still retain its power to influence the members?
4. What do the board, staff and constituency think of the soundness of administrative procedures? What suggestions do they have for improving on procedures?
5. What constitutes an effective group orientation program for new board and new staff members?
6. What processes are used in selecting individuals for groups such as boards, staff and committees?
7. Are there important differences between work with representative and nonrepresentative or general groups?
8. How do groups develop in capacity to take more responsibility?
9. What training programs and methods are most valuable in the preparation of chairmen and other group leaders?
10. What kinds of records are of greatest help to groups?

When administration is essentially cooperative and democratic in character, then evaluation, study and research become normal means of advancing the agency to new heights of attainment. Administrative processes become major areas for

analysis, because no part of social work is more central to the meeting of constituency needs. A high order of administrative competence is required to lead staff, board and constituent groups to pool their knowledge and experience that better policies may be developed and more intelligently executed. It is to be hoped that more and more attention will be given to the subtle dynamics of groups working together for the social welfare.

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